

Experience, Reality and Representation

On the Implications of a Maximally Non-Deflationary Phenomenal Realism

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Abstract

This thesis is dedicated to uncovering the conceptual and metaphysical entailments of a form of phenomenal realism I call Robust Realism. I argue that a maximally non-deflationary phenomenal realism of this kind constitutes the only principled form of resistance to Daniel Dennett's eliminativist strategy. I also argue that while Robust Realists constitute a minority within the philosophical community, the deflationist majority have reason to be interested in the results of such a project, as it promises a way beyond the dialogical impasse marking the current qualia debate. I begin by arguing that the definitive commitments of Robust Realism entail a thesis regarding the constitutive nature of phenomenal property instances, that their constitutive nature is exhausted by their experienced nature. From here, I argue that spatiotemporal inclusion and causal interaction, the two principal means of forging a metaphysical connection between experiences and a metaphysically real world, aren't available to Robust Realists. I then argue for a thesis regarding the nature of relations, roughly, that relations necessarily implicate their relata. This thesis forms the basis for my case against the nascent Phenomenal Intentionality Research Program, and combines with other considerations to constitute a case for the impossibility of the kind of transcendently real representation of phenomenal properties that Robust Realism is founded upon.

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to determine the implications of a form of realism regarding phenomenal properties I refer to as Robust Realism. The aim of this first chapter is to motivate such a project by demonstrating that less committal forms of phenomenal realism face dialogic difficulties in resisting Daniel Dennett's phenomenal eliminativism.

Section 2 focuses on the passage in Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* that, according to David Chalmers (1996 p. 190), sets out his main argument for the explanatory adequacy of deflationary accounts of consciousness. I argue that Chalmers' is a misinterpretation, as Dennett isn't advancing an argument, but rather, a potential *strategy* for the elimination of qualia. The strategy (which I call Dennettian Dissolution) explains away phenomenal properties by way of an appeal to mistaken judgements to the effect that one encounters such properties.

In section 3, I draw attention to a peculiar feature of the debate between Dennett and his non-deflationist rivals, its paucity of argument. Dennett offers no direct argument for the claim that phenomenal properties are mere intentional objects of mistaken judgements, and non-deflationary phenomenal realists offer no *reasons* (conceptually inflected semantic contents) in support of their realism concerning qualia. I then outline the desiderata each party relies on in theory choice here (an issue that will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 2). While Dennett places a premium on theory building considerations, non-deflationary realists place a premium on acquaintance-based certainty.

Discussion of the centrality of immediate acquaintance for non-deflationary realism draws attention to the transcendently realistic orientation of the view. This is the focus of section 4

of the chapter. Non-deflationary realism has it that experience puts us in immediate contact with the transcendental (as opposed to ‘merely’ empirical, epistemic or notional) reality of phenomenal properties. Deflationary views, in contrast, postulate a kind of role-theoretic mediation that distances us from phenomenal properties in-themselves. Our very *concept* of consciousness is opaque and role-theoretic. I argue that while this distancing move has a degree of historical precedent, given the tendency towards epistemic-role essentialism among classical sense-data theorists, contemporary non-deflationary realists are properly careful to distinguish the distinctively *qualitative* essence of phenomenal properties from any theoretical role properties possessive of such an essence might play.

In section 5, I then draw attention to an essential connection between physically reductive theories of phenomenal properties and Dennett’s strategy. Any attempted reduction of experiences to physical properties *must*, I argue, invoke Dennettian Dissolution at some point. In section 6, I argue, if Dennett’s strategy works at all, it works in a wide variety of cases. Any objection to Dennett’s eliminativism by reductivists, therefore, is on difficult ground. Non-reductive realists have also invoked Dennettian Dissolution on occasions, thereby conceding significant ground to Dennett. In section 6.1 I discuss a textbook example, the Dennettian Dissolution of phenomenal depth common among earlier empiricists. In section 6.2 I discuss a more wide-ranging tendency to invoke Dennettian Dissolution with respect to the more cognitive-cum-conceptual aspects of phenomenology, flagging an issue that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 – that of the particular relation such phenomenology bears to *actual* cognition and conceptuality.

Finally, section 7 brings my primary objective in this thesis into focus. Inasmuch as Dennett’s eliminativist strategy invites wider application once invoked, a degree of theoretical importance accrues to views characterised by a forbearance of Dennettian Dissolution *tout court*. I call acquaintance-based phenomenal realism that outrightly rejects this strategy

Robust Realism. The bulk of this thesis then critically considers the implications of this view. I close the chapter by plotting a course for subsequent chapters.

2. The *Real* Dennett on *Real* Seeming

In his eliminativist manifesto, *Consciousness Explained*, Daniel Dennett offers a highly deflationist account of consciousness, one cast solely in terms of notions such as reportability and judgement, and, most significantly, making no mention of a peculiar species of phenomenal properties. Having done so, he enters into a much-discussed dialogue with his doubtful interlocutor Otto. The dialogue centres upon a visual illusion on the book's dust jacket, the appearance of pinkness on a non-pink surface. In short, Otto, Dennett's interlocutor, thinks a theory of consciousness cast solely in terms of notions such as judgement and reportability fails to account for such appearances. Dennett (1993a p. 363) thinks all that needs to be accounted for here is a false *judgement*: "there isn't any pinkish glowing ring". Otto agrees that there's no pinkish glowing ring, but insists that there seems to be one, and it's "*that* ring" that remains unaccounted for (Dennett 1993a p. 363). Dennett (1993a p.363) replies that "There is no such thing as a pink ring that merely seems to be". Otto then insists he doesn't just "*think* there seems to be a pinkish glowing ring; there really seems to be a pinkish glowing ring" (1993a p. 363). At this point, Dennett (1993a p. 364) makes his crucial move:

Now you've done it. You've fallen in a trap, along with a lot of others. You seem to think there's a difference between thinking (judging, deciding, being of the heartfelt opinion that) something seems pink to you and something really seeming pink to you. But there is no difference. There is no such phenomenon as really seeming – over and above the phenomenon of judging in one way or another that something is the case.

David Chalmers (1996 p. 190) sees the foregoing dialogue, Dennett's response in particular, as the book's dialogically pivotal moment. On this much, we are in agreement. It is here that

Dennett's eliminativist strategy is laid bare. But while Chalmers takes Dennett to be putting forward a relatively weak *argument* to the effect that his deflationist theory of consciousness accounts for all that needs to be accounted for, I take him to be proffering a potent explanatory strategy that promises to solve the problem of consciousness so long as its method is accepted. I'll briefly discuss Chalmers' gloss on the passage in question before explaining why I think it fails to do Dennett justice.

Chalmers (2010 p. 31) credits Daniel Dennett with being "one of the few philosophers who has attempted to give" arguments intended to overturn "prima facie intuitions" to the effect that "the question of explaining experience is distinct from questions about explaining various functions". He gleans one such argument from the foregoing dialogue, describing it as "perhaps the central argument of *Consciousness Explained*" (Chalmers 1996 p. 190).

- (P1) A theory of experience needs to explain why things *seem* the way they do to us.
- (P2) Dennett's theory explains why things *seem* the way they do to us.
- (C) Dennett's theory explains what a theory of experience needs to explain.

Chalmers (1996 p. 190) goes on to describe this as an "elegant argument, with a ring of plausibility that many reductionist arguments about consciousness lack", but maintains that it trades on an equivocation:

[This argument's] elegance derives from the way it exploits a subtle ambiguity in the notion of "seeming," which balances on the knife-edge between the phenomenal and psychological realms. There is a phenomenal sense of "seem," in which for things to seem a certain way is just for them to be *experienced* a certain way. And there is a psychological sense of "seem," in which for things to seem a certain way is for us to be disposed to judge that they are that way.

Chalmers isn't the first philosopher to make this distinction. Chisholm (1957 p. 43) flags the same ambiguity more than thirty years previously: "Appear words – "appear," "seem,"

“look,” “sound,” “feel,” “smell,” and the like – have many uses”. He goes on to make a threefold distinction between the epistemic, comparative and noncomparative senses of ‘appear’- words (Chisholm 1957 pp. 44-50). Their epistemic sense corresponds to Chalmers’ psychological sense, their noncomparative sense to his phenomenal sense,¹ their comparative sense to the sense in which to say “‘x appears so-and-so’ ... is to compare *x* with things that *are* so and so” (Chisholm 1957 p. 45).² Earlier still, Price (1941 p. 288) can be found making an exactly analogous twofold distinction between senses of the word ‘appear’, one having “reference to judgements or assertions”, the other having “reference to sensations”.

That ‘appear’-words have a phenomenal sense which needn’t implicate psychological categories, intellectual capacities and such isn’t an eccentric view held only by those living on the non-reductivist margins. Dretske (1995 pp. 67, 68; 2008 p. 731) distinguishes the phenomenal sense of such terms from their epistemic, or, in other texts, their doxastic, sense so as to maintain the “distinction between sentience and sapience” he is committed to in his work on perception. The commonsensical nature of such a distinction is well encapsulated in the following quote:

The details I experience are not always reflected in my judgements about the world (or my judgements, if I make them, about my experience). So my judgements do not always – perhaps they never – track my conscious experiences of the world (Dretske 1995 p. 114).

That those of the non-reductivist minority also endorse such a distinction is a given. To be so uncharitable as to afford all their uses of ‘appear’-words intellectualist senses would be to render their views so ridiculous that the ongoing engagement with them by the philosophical

¹ When explicating Chisholm’s distinction, Jackson (1977 p. 30) relabels the noncomparative sense thusly.

² There will be no further discussion of the comparative sense, but it is noteworthy that even the qualia freak’s beloved ‘what it’s like’ locution has a comparative sense (Lewis 1999 p. 265).

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community, including Dennett himself, would be a puzzling discredit to all concerned.

Consider Robinson's (1994 p. 32) formulation of his 'Phenomenal Principle':

If there sensibly appears to a subject to be something which possesses a particular sensible quality then there is something of which the subject is aware which does possess that sensible quality.

Were the qualifier 'sensibly' dropped, and 'appear', 'aware' and such afforded purely intellectual senses, nobody would subscribe to this principle. Nobody thinks, say, that whenever a subject is *disposed to judge* something possesses a sensible quality, there is something of which that subject is somehow *intellectually aware*, aware in the manner that I am aware of Big Ben for instance, that possesses it. Someone who doesn't know that dogs have no colour vision might be disposed to judge that their experiences, minds, brains or whatever are possessive of sensible colour qualities. That person would be wrong, and no other thing would possess such qualities on account of he or she being disposed thus.³

Is Dennett guilty of such pathological disingenuousness? No. After all, Dennett (1993a p. 364) acknowledges the prevalence of a belief in a distinctly phenomenal form of seeming, *real seeming*, as he calls it, in the very passage from which Chalmers purports to derive the foregoing argument: "You seem to think there's a difference between thinking (judging, deciding, being of the heartfelt opinion that) something seems pink to you and something *really* seeming pink to you". Dennett knows his enemy all too well. He has conceded on more than one occasion that it *seems* as if there are qualia. Given that qualia *are* phenomenal seemings, the real thetic seemings he is at pains to discredit, this is tantamount to conceding that it seems, in the purely intellectual sense he sanctions, that things seem some way or other in the thetic phenomenal sense he doesn't sanction. It can intellectually seem that something

³ Presumably Robinson wants the strength of his conditional to be such that the consequent holds on account of the antecedent holding.

is so without it being so. Such is the case, according to Dennett, for the qualia freak. He or she mistakenly thinks things phenomenally seem some way or other. A fairer appraisal of Dennett's position would emphasise this subordination of phenomenal seeming to intellectual seeming.⁴ He thinks that how things phenomenally seem to us is sufficiently explained in terms of mistaken judgements to the effect that things seem that way. Let us call the explanatory technique he proposes Dennettian Dissolution.

Dennettian Dissolution – The explaining away of things phenomenally seeming some way by appeal to it wrongly seeming, in a merely intellectual sense, that things phenomenally seem that way.

The 'explaining *away*' locution is crucial, as is the qualification 'wrongly'. Dennettian Dissolution is not merely the *explaining* of phenomenal properties in terms of thoughts that they are instantiated, such that thoughts to the effect that certain phenomenal properties are instantiated somehow constitutively yield instances of those very properties. It is an *eliminativist* strategy, one directly invoking the distinction between the senses of 'seeming' that Chalmers accuses Dennett of equivocating on.

⁴ Chalmers would nonetheless be more than justified in claiming that Dennett *exploits* the ambiguity of 'appear'-words. Dennett's use of language connotative of phenomenal notions definitely disguises the radical nature of his position. For instance, he describes consciousness as a "user illusion". The term 'illusion' does appear in doxastic contexts, such as when Frank Sinatra assures us that the belief that love and marriage can be separated is an illusion, but it is more suggestive of illusory phenomenal, rather than doxastic, appearances, appearances the existence of which he wishes to deny. The term 'delusion', on the other hand, has stronger intellectual connotations; intuitively one can have illusory phenomenal appearances without being deluded inasmuch as one believes them to be just that. To tell one's readership that they are deluded might be to risk offending them, but if in offering a watered down description of their condition, one risks playing to the very delusion one is wishing to disburden them of, it might be argued that one should risk offence or just not bother. I've had more than one conversation with people that have casually read Dennett who make comments to the effect that he doesn't really deny phenomenal experience, proof enough that a less attentive reader, especially one sympathetic to naturalism and intuitively sceptical of the so called 'hard problem of consciousness', might buy in without suffering the buyer's remorse those of us that are sympathetic to the idea of a *sui generis* phenomenal species of seeming, looking, appearing etc think he or she should.

3. Arguments Anyone?

To claim that we merely mistakenly think things phenomenally seem some way or other is not to demonstrate that it is so. Is Dennett's case any better for resting, not upon a question begging argument, but upon an unargued assertion (and a counterintuitive one at that)?

Dennett's paucity of argument hasn't gone without comment. Howard Robinson (1994 p. 198) describes Dennett's approach as the "Jericho Method": "He believes that marching around a philosophical problem often enough, proclaiming what are, plausibly, relevant scientific truths, the problem will dissolve before our eyes".

But as Chalmers (2010 p. 33) himself acknowledges, Dennett might be in a position to treat complaints of this kind, when coming from *phenomenal realists*, as instances of the pot calling the kettle black, as phenomenal realists, likewise, proffer no *arguments* for the existence of their beloved qualia. Arguments like the knowledge argument and the zombie argument aren't arguments for the *existence* of qualia, but rather, arguments for their *irreducibility*, which take their existence for granted. This is most obvious in the case of the zombie argument.⁵ The possibility of a 'zombie twin world', a world that is physically identical to ours but lacking phenomenology, is only a threat to physicalism on the *assumption* that such a world wouldn't be the same as ours in that respect; that is, that an *identical* twin world *wouldn't* be a zombie twin world. In other words, it's a threat to physicalism on the assumption of *phenomenal realism*. The situation with the knowledge argument is a little more complicated.⁶ The thought experiment from which the argument derives has it that when Mary, the brilliant colour scientist who has learnt everything there is to know about the physical aspects of colour vision from the confines of a black and white

⁵ For a sympathetic exposition of the zombie argument, see Chalmers (1996 pp. 94-99).

⁶ For the canonical formulation discussed here, see Jackson (1982 p. 130). For further variations on the theme, see Jackson (1982 pp. 129, 130) and Robinson (1982 p. 4).

room, finally escapes the room and sees a tomato, she comes to know a fact of which she was heretofore unaware, namely, what it's like to see red. The derivation of an argument about *actual* states of affairs from such a thought experiment depends upon the situation it describes being appropriately comparable in certain respects to actual states of affairs. While Mary's cognitive capacities are highly idealized, her perceptual capacities, and the world in which she finds herself, are supposed to be very much like ours. Most importantly, we are to *assume* ourselves to possess knowledge of the kind Mary only gains upon escape; i.e. we assume *phenomenal realism*. In like manner, the 'arguments for sense-data' that pervade early analytic epistemology are arguments, not for the *existence* of sense-data, usually regarded as phenomenal particulars of immediate acquaintance, but for their non-identity with physical object surfaces. The argument from illusion, for instance, takes for granted the *existence* of phenomenal appearances in certain perceptual cases.⁷ It is an argument to the effect that, given certain doubtlessly *existent* properties of such doubtlessly *existent* appearances don't inhere in the surfaces of the relevant physical objects, it is merely the appearances themselves, and not the physical objects, to which we have immediate perceptual access. If reasons for a claim are conceptually inflected contents, propositions (or, for the more nominalistically inclined, sentences)⁸ from which such a claim can be validly inferred, phenomenal realists have historically offered no reason at all for their realism.

It would nonetheless be an injustice to the sophistication and nuance of the dialogue to reduce it to a mere table-thumping match. There is a sense in which, in marching around the problem in the manner described by Robinson, Dennett, by his own lights, is securing a solid case for eliminativism. Likewise, many resigned phenomenal realists are completely unperturbed by

⁷ For a relatively straightforward exposition of the argument from illusion, see Ayer (1969 pp. 1-11).

⁸ For now at least let us put to one side the view, maintained, for instance, by McDowell (1994 p. 9), that experiences themselves constitute such contents.

charges of paucity of argument on their part, as they believe their realism to be more solidly founded than any conviction premised upon reasons, taken in the foregoing sense.

3.1 Integrate or Die: Dennett's Quinean Imperative

Turning first to Dennett, his intention, in marching around the problem as he does, is to bring the *theoretically* intransigent nature of qualia into relief. For anyone who subscribes to Quine's (1939 p. 708) famous dictum that "To be is to be the value of a variable", albeit in our best empirical theories, such intransigence alone constitutes grounds for elimination. This is the primary motivation for the various forms of deflationism regarding consciousness in contemporary philosophical literature. Our best empirical theories, it is claimed, are physical theories, and qualia, at least as characterised by realists of a non-deflationist stripe, simply won't integrate. The sentiment has been well articulated by Smart (1991 p. 169):

It seems to me that science is increasingly giving us a viewpoint whereby organisms are able to be seen as physicochemical mechanisms: it seems that even the behaviour of man himself will one day be explicable in mechanistic terms. There does seem to be, so far as science is concerned, nothing in the world but increasingly complex arrangements of physical constituents ... That everything should be explicable in terms of physics (together of course with descriptions of the ways in which the parts are put together – roughly, biology is to physics as radio-engineering is to electromagnetism) except the occurrence of sensations seems to me frankly unbelievable.

In 'Quining Qualia', Dennett (1993b p. 394) makes the case that the 'limited evidential powers of neurophysiology' are such that even at the *ideal limits* of enquiry, it might be impossible to make a principled judgement regarding the point within the plausibly relevant physiological processes where "qualia might appear as properties of [a] phase of [such] process[es]". Dennett (1993b p. 394) asks us to imagine a subject, Chase, whose taste buds have been "surgically inverted" in such a way that "post-operatively, sugar tastes salty, salt tastes sour, etc" but who has "subsequently compensated – as revealed by his behaviour. He

now says that the sugary substance we place on his tongue is sweet, and no longer favours gravy on his ice cream”. He then cites two possible explanations. Chase’s qualia might still be abnormal, but adjustments in “his memories of how things used to taste” make it such that “he no longer notices any anomaly”, or, instead, “the memory-comparison step occurs just prior to the qualia phase in taste perception”, so “it now yields the same old qualia for the same stimulation” (Dennett 1993b p. 395). Dennett (1993b p. 395) writes, “These seem to be two substantially different hypotheses, but the physiological evidence, no matter how well developed, will not tell us on which side of memory to put qualia”. He thinks it particularly noteworthy that third-personal empirical investigation would fail on this score “*in spite of being better evidence than the subject’s own introspective convictions*” (Dennett 1993b p. 395). One of the possibilities, after all, involves memory corruption. Even if one were to attribute traditional Cartesian infallibility to Chase, such infallibility has only ever extended to the experiences one is in fact *having*, not to those one has *had*. Chase might have infallible access to conscious memory episodes, but this isn’t the same as infallible knowledge of the veracity of such episodes. *Theoretical indeterminacy* of this kind could be said to be Dennett’s proposed grounds for eliminativism, Dennettian Dissolution his proposed means.

3.2 Better Than Reasons: Justification by Acquaintance

Turning now to those phenomenal realists who insist, without argument, upon the existence of phenomenal properties, they are wont to maintain that it is experience *itself*, rather than further conceptually inflected contents,⁹ that forms the basis for their realism. Chalmers (1996 p. 196) writes:

What justifies our beliefs about our experiences, if not a causal link to those experiences, and if it is not the mechanisms by which the beliefs are formed? I think the answer to this is clear:

⁹ Once again, I shelve the issue of whether or not experiences themselves constitute such contents.

it is *having* the experience that justifies the beliefs. For example, the very fact that I have a red experience now provides justification for my belief that I am having a red experience.

Chalmers' (1996 p. 196) reason for ruling out causally mediated 'reliabilist' forms of justification with respect to beliefs about experiences is that "they make our access to consciousness mediated ... But intuitively, our access to consciousness is not mediated at all". It is instructive that Chalmers speaks of the *fact* that he is having a red experience. Positive facts presumably supervene on the states of affairs on account of which they are indeed facts, the very states of reality that make beliefs in such facts true beliefs. For phenomenal realists like Chalmers, every experience directly acquaints us with the *truth-maker* for the claim that it exists, that the particular phenomenal properties and relations it instantiates exist, and truth-makers for more general claims, that phenomenal properties in general exist, that properties of the various phenomenal kinds it instantiates exist, that *something* exists etc. To ask for reasons in such a case is to ask for something less than we have. Why trade the very thing that makes a claim true for mere representations, as apt for falsity as they are truth, which establish the claim's truth only *if* they are indeed true? That we ever rely on such representations is testament to our epistemically impoverished predicament; as Kant (cited in Allison 1983 p. 23) once wrote, "... God does not require the process of reasoning because, since all things are crystal clear to his gaze ... he has no need of analysis as the darkened night of our intelligence necessarily has".

4. Role-Theoretic Essentialism: Kantian Themes

In the last section I briefly outlined the motivations behind both Dennett's phenomenal eliminativism and the phenomenal realism of such philosophers as Chalmers. In this section I argue that the differing motivations here can be situated within a broader intellectual tradition involving the reception of what I will call Kant's distancing move, a strategy embraced by reductivists and rejected by non-reductivists. I will argue that while the historic

emergence of such a strategy is unsurprising, given a tendency towards epistemic essentialism among classical sense-data theorists, contemporary non-reductive realism is premised upon a rejection of the role-theoretic essentialism required for its application.

It is noteworthy that Henry Allison cites the foregoing passage from Kant as an example of how his pre-critical writings embodied the transcendentially realist perspective he would later abandon. If Allison's 'non-phenomenalistic' interpretation of Kant is correct, phenomenal realism of the foregoing kind is yet another form of the kind of transcendental realism Kant wished to dispense with. Kant, according to Allison, maintained that early empiricists like Locke, Berkeley and Hume were "guilty of confusing appearances with things in themselves" (Allison 1983 pp. 19, 23). Putnam (1981 pp. 62, 63) also attributes such a view to Kant: "Kant says again and again, and in different words, that the objects of inner sense are not transcendently real (noumenal), that they are 'transcendently ideal' (things for us), and that they are no more and no less directly knowable than so-called 'external' objects". Galen Strawson unabashedly avows transcendental realism of this kind: "...we are acquainted with reality *as it is in itself*, in certain respects, in having experience as we do" (cited in Goff 2006 p. 55). Chalmers' (1996 pp. 154, 208) view is a little more complicated, as he remains open to the possibility that while experience betrays, in a direct and unmediated way, the being of *instances* of phenomenal *properties*, such instances might have non-phenomenal 'protophenomenal' constituent *realisers*.¹⁰ But the being of those property instances, as betrayed in experience, is, nonetheless, their being in a transcendently realist sense, not in any 'merely' empirical, epistemic or notional, sense. In his publicly available response to the Philpapers survey, Chalmers expresses a preference for a correspondence, rather than a deflationary, or, more importantly for our purposes, an *epistemic*, conception of truth (Profile

¹⁰ The coherence of this view will be called into question in Chapter 3.

for David Chalmers). The truth-makers for truths aren't functions of our conceptual framework, the ideal limits of enquiry etc. They are aspects of reality as it is in itself. The phenomenal properties purportedly functioning as truth-makers for claims about experiences are no different. Such properties are, in Kantian parlance, *empirically* ideal inasmuch as they inhere in minds, taken in the broad Cartesian sense, but such inherence is an absolute non-conceptually constituted inherence in absolute non-conceptually constituted denizens of an absolute non-conceptually constituted reality. They are property instances *in themselves*. If they are in fact protophenomenally constituted, they are nonetheless as real as any other non-fundamental property instances in mind independent reality. Assuming the falsity of mereological nihilism, they are perfectly real, an ontological free lunch given the being of their constitutive natures. Chalmers makes no distinction between the being *for us* of phenomenal *properties* and their being *in itself*.

My reason for bringing Kant into the picture is not to engage directly with his critique of transcendental realism, but rather, because the 'distancing' move he makes, in insisting that nothing betrays itself, as it is in itself, to the mind, might be said to be the key move in all attempts at deflationism with respect to consciousness, both reductivist *and* eliminativist, that have found their way into contemporary philosophical literature.¹¹ If Allison and Putnam are right, Kant might have been the first major figure in modern philosophy to endorse a *topic-neutral* stance with respect to phenomenal properties, in opposition to the *topic-specific* characterisation endorsed by the early empiricists, along with contemporary philosophers like Strawson and Chalmers. The mind apprehends experiences, not as they are in themselves, but rather, opaquely, as something akin to placeholders in a conceptual economy.

¹¹ I will eventually discuss a view that eschews this distancing move but nonetheless has it that experiences are exhaustively constituted by physical properties, but I have not actually seen the view endorsed anywhere. Also, it is only discussed on account of the fact that it might initially seem to allow for a *non-deflationary* form of physical reduction.

Replace the *conceptual* economy peculiar to Kant's transcendental idealism with the more contemporary, and, more realist, notion of a *theoretical* economy, and you have, according to one popular characterisation at least, the reductivist program of contemporary physicalists. A longstanding and widely held view has it that physical theory characterises its entities *opaquely*, as *whatever it is* that plays such and such a role, remaining silent about what such entities are like in and of themselves (Chalmers 2012a p. 348). If phenomenal properties can be exhaustively accounted for in terms of such properties, there is no topic-specific aspect of experience, *qua* experience, to be accounted for. The fact of the being of a phenomenal property is a matter of the relevant role being realised, not the intrinsic nature of the realiser. Of course, since the being of the realisation of the role supervenes on the being of the realiser, unmediated access to the being of such a property, the truth-maker for the claim that it exists, would still have to be unmediated access to the intrinsic realiser, only in this case, the realiser would have no bearing on the nature of the property *qua* phenomenal.¹² But nobody thinks our mind gives us unmediated access to the *non-experiential* constitutive realisers of our experiences. Such reductivists clearly eschew such immediacy, opting instead for a Kantian conception of mentality as exhaustively mediated, topic-neutral and *representational*.¹³

The viability of this approach is subject to question. Realists like Chalmers and Strawson wholeheartedly reject the Kantian claim that phenomenal properties aren't given immediately

¹² The claim that unmediated access to a property instance entails immediate access to its intrinsic realiser, while striking me as somewhat obvious, is nonetheless controversial. Chalmers, as we have already seen, thinks immediate access to the being of phenomenal property instances need not entail immediate access to the being of their constitutive realisers. I'll be making what I believe to be a watertight case for the claim in Chapter 3. Those that disagree can ignore it for now, as nothing much hinges on it. It remains true, in any case, that role-theoretic reductivists typically eschew immediate access in favour of a mediated, topic-neutral representationalism, and I'll be discussing the prospect of a physicalism that retains immediate access soon enough.

¹³ For a classic defense of the topic-neutral approach, see Smart (1991).

in experience as they are in themselves.¹⁴ As always, they will appeal directly to their putative truth-makers, the truth-makers they *directly* encounter, as their basis for rejecting such claims. The take home point of the knowledge argument is arguably not just that no amount of *physical* information yields the kind of topic-specific information given in consciousness, but no amount of opaque topic-neutral information of *any* kind. Mary could presumably have a *role-theoretically* complete *dualistic* account of *phenomenal* properties, which phenomenal properties covary with which brain states and such, before she escapes. She could know all there is to know about phenomenal colour properties short of their intrinsic phenomenal natures. But no amount of topic-neutral information will give her the topic-specific knowledge born of unmediated contact with those natures.

Redefinition of qualia's essence is stock in trade for phenomenal realists with reductive ambitions. If phenomenal properties are inherent natures, not subject to further analysis, their project is doomed from the get-go. Experience must be explicable in purely role-theoretic terms, such that the being of an experience is a matter of something, it matters not what, playing the *experience* role. For phenomenal realists like Chalmers (1996 p. 105), any such move constitutes evasion of the real issue: "To analyse consciousness in terms of some functional notion is either to change the subject or define away the problem. One might well define "world peace" as "a ham sandwich." Achieving world peace becomes much easier, but it is a hollow achievement".

4.1 Epistemic Essentialism: Classical Sense-Data Theory

If role-theoretic essentialism of this kind is so obviously inadequate, what has led so many philosophers of good standing to endorse some version of it or another? In the least, a degree

¹⁴ To reiterate, Chalmers merely thinks that phenomenal *properties* or *natures* are immediately experienced, not necessarily their constituent realisers.

of historical sense can be made of such attempts. While Dennett might not be guilty of equivocating between epistemic and phenomenal senses of ‘appear’-words, other philosophers most certainly have been. Hegel (1977 §90), for instance, gives the initial impression of understanding and respecting the distinction at issue – “In *apprehending* it, we must refrain from trying to *comprehend* it” – but then goes on to treat sensuous receptivity as *epistemic* givenism, “sense-certainty”, and indict it as a means of *knowing*. More significantly, classical sense-data theory, the prominent form of non-reductive phenomenal realism directly preceding the advent of such role-theoretic reductionism, lent itself to such equivocation.¹⁵ Sense-data, on the classical conception, are immediate objects of perception that “have exactly the properties they appear to have” (Huemer 2011). The term ‘appear’ is presumably to be afforded its phenomenal sense in this instance.¹⁶ But sense-data were also afforded a unique epistemic *role*, that of being objects which, by virtue of one’s acquaintance with them, conferred justification on one’s empirical judgements, and one occasionally finds epistemological role-theoretic considerations being given priority over the dictates of naive phenomenology, even with respect to the question of the *phenomenal character* of sense-data (Huemer 2011).

Consider Ayer’s response to the problem of the speckled hen. The purported problem is that when one has the “visual sense-datum which is yielded by a single glance at a speckled hen”, “the datum may be said to “comprise” many speckles”, but one might not be able to say with any degree of confidence exactly how many (Chisholm 1942 p. 368). The problem is meant to be that “the whole purpose of sense data ... is to reify how things *look*”, and in this case,

¹⁵ Leading proponents of classical sense-data theory included Broad (1925), Russell (1998), Price (1950) and Ayer (1969).

¹⁶ When asked by Brian Magee (1987 p. 315) to explain Russell’s influence on his own philosophy, A.J. Ayer says, “I still think that one should start with what Russell calls sense data – I now prefer the term ‘sense qualia’, because of a technical difference about whether you begin with particulars or with something more general, but for our present purposes it comes to the same thing”.

there doesn't *look* to be any particular number of speckles (Robinson 1994 p. 191). Ayer's (1969 p. 124) response is to bite the bullet - "If the sense-data do not appear to be enumerable, they really are not enumerable". But this bullet clearly need only be bitten if one thinks the sense in which sense data "are as they appear", or "reify how things look", is epistemic, not phenomenal. The common sense view, previously articulated by Dretske, is that the manifold complexity of experience is never completely accounted for in judgement. So an experienced speckled hen surface might phenomenally seem/appear/look to have a determinate amount of speckles, on account of its *determinate phenomenal character*, without intellectually seeming/appearing/looking to have any particular number, i.e. without one making a judgement to the effect that that there is some determinate number of speckles, or even being capable of doing so with warrant sufficient to constitute knowledge (Robinson 1994 p. 193).

Ayer (1959 pp. 93, 94) suggests that "in saying that the sense field [corresponding to the surface of a striped tiger] contains a number of stripes, we need be saying no more than that it has the Gestalt quality of being striated", a quality "which is not analysable in terms of a numerical disjunction of stripes". It is not my intention to disparage the invocation of such qualities, ones which, in some sense, *connote* complexity without *embodying* it. On the contrary, there is at least one area in which naive phenomenology dictates that consciousness *does* in fact embody qualities of this kind. As Colin McGinn (2013 p. 93) has recently pointed out, conscious entertainment of thoughts involving what are intuitively *complex* concepts needn't, and generally *doesn't*, involve their analytic complexity registering in experience. McGinn (2013 pp. 95, 98) goes on to postulate a "mysterious mechanism of synthesis", whereby consciousness *unifies* the disparate analytic components of such concepts in a manner which effaces their disparity. Whether or not this further claim is

plausible,¹⁷ it does seem true that there is something it's like to entertain thoughts of complex things, or of complexity itself for that matter, and that the complexity consciously considered isn't embodied in the conscious considering. But this is beside the point, as naive phenomenology dictates that *visually* experienced complexity *is* in fact embodied in visual experience. Standing directly in front of an optical art painting containing several hundred dots and attempting to visually take it all in, I would describe my phenomenology as follows: There are more unambiguous dot appearance instances in the part of the visual field constituting the locus of my visual attention alone than I am capable of cognitively accounting for. Those unambiguous instances quickly shade into borderline cases, dot appearances under some but not all precisifications, but it seems that even the peripheral extremes of my visual field, which admit of the least complexity, have more going on than I'm capable of cognitively accounting for.

Admittedly, it's not clear Ayer himself insists that all sense-data must be cognitively accounted for. His rejection of "the possibility of there being sense-data whose existence is not noticed at the time they are sensed" has nonetheless been construed as an avowal of such a view; 'noticing' carries implications of participation in a cognitive-cum-epistemic economy (Ayer 1969 p. 125). It is on this basis that Price (1941 p. 288, 289) accuses him of conflating what we have been calling the epistemic and phenomenal senses of 'appear', and, in doing so, having made the "mistake of the idealist who maintained that all cognition is judging, and denied the existence of acquaintance". In his response to Price, Ayer (1959 p. 101) goes some way towards distancing himself from this view, endorsing "a sense of acquaintance with, or direct apprehension of, sense-data that does not entail the making of any judgement about them" (Ayer 1959 p. 101). But he remains adamant that there is no "legitimate use of the

¹⁷ The Constitution Thesis argued for in Chapter 3 rules out any account of the constitution of cognitive phenomenology that extends beyond its experienced nature.

words ‘look’ and ‘notice’ ... such as to justify ... attaching meaning to the statement that ‘my sense-datum of the flower really was sky-blue, but I noticed only that it was bluish’” (Ayer 1959 p. 102). Ayer’s attempt to explain why not, while less than clear, seems to focus upon the need for an “adequate *criterion* of the characteristics that the physical object appears to have, or the sense-datum really has”. Inasmuch as the notion of a criterion in play here seems to be a subjective *epistemic* one, Ayer still appears to be letting epistemic considerations trump phenomenological considerations with respect to the question of the character of phenomenology.

4.2 From Explanans to Explanandum: Qualia’s Qualitative Essence

Given that even the prominent phenomenal realists of the time were sometimes willing to compromise phenomenological adequacy so as to force a fit between phenomenal properties and the epistemic role they afforded such properties, it is perhaps unsurprising that a wave of role-theoretic reductionism followed.¹⁸ But it is perhaps equally unsurprising that in the face of such a gear change, phenomenal realists were reminded that their initial case for sense-data rested, not upon role-theoretic considerations (‘Our best empirical theories postulate properties that play such and such a role’), but upon a *direct* appeal to phenomenology, (‘Whether or not some physical object possesses property *x*, *experience* makes it patently clear that *something* does’). A new form of phenomenal realism thus emerged, one which emphasised the natures thus revealed, taken as they are in themselves, over any theoretical load bearing work they might ultimately be capable of performing. The natures themselves, not any role they might play, came to be taken as determinative of the *essence* of phenomenality. Chalmers (1996 p.105) writes, “Although conscious states may play various

¹⁸ Early proponents included Smart (1991) and Lewis (1966). Functionalism’s rise to orthodoxy served to consolidate the role-theoretic approach, as functional properties are role-theoretic properties *par excellence* (Heil 1998 pp. 89, 96).

causal roles, they are not *defined* by their causal roles. Rather, what makes them conscious is that they have a certain phenomenal feel”. Qualia type subjective states, not on the basis of their epistemic roles, but rather, on the basis of how they *feel*, or, to use the canonical expression, what they are like (Chalmers 1996 pp. 11, 359). Phenomenal properties went from being unproblematic *explanans* in *epistemic* theories to being a problematic *explanandum* in *metaphysical* theories, properties any adequate metaphysics must properly account for. One hasn’t accounted for every aspect of reality if one hasn’t accounted for what it’s like to be a bat (Nagel 1979). So little came to be expected of phenomenal properties *qua* *explanans* that some were more than willing to entertain the prospect of their being causally inert epiphenomena (Jackson 1982 pp. 133-135). So much was their *epistemic* role downplayed that one finds Frank Jackson (1977 p. 106), after having built a non-standard case for sense-data around the analysis of ‘appear’-word statements, writing, “The conception of sense-data as the subjects of those fundamental judgements which form the foundations of our knowledge of the world around us is irrelevant for us ... perhaps sense data do have an important epistemological role to play, but on our approach that will be a discovery about them, not a matter of definition”.

There are positive things to be said about such an essentially non-epistemic characterisation of the essential nature of experiences, appearances and such. It might, for instance, be said to cohere better with the *varying* positions they have assumed in the epistemic order throughout philosophical history. Their integration into the machinery of epistemology in early empiricist philosophy, as immediate epistemological givens forming the foundations for empirical knowledge, was testament to a newfound faith in the furnishings of the senses born of the recent successes of the new inductive paradigm within the natural sciences. Turn the clock back far enough and one finds Parmenides arguing that they are inherently deceptive, the Socrates of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave comparing the light of the sun to that of a flame

casting shadows on a cave's wall, early expressions of distrust regarding the epistemic credentials of appearances that cast an enduring historical shadow (Plato 2003 pp. 156-159; Palmer 2012). Even in twentieth century philosophy qualia haven't always appeared in the guise of immediate epistemological givens. For Wilfrid Sellars, for instance, knowledge of the sense impressions providing perceptions, imbibings of *propositional* contents, with their "raw feel" comes late in the epistemological game (Sellars 1995 § 60; DeVries 2005 pp. 206-211). They are third-personal theoretical postulates (Sellars 1995 § 60, 62).¹⁹

But there is an obvious risk of overstating the degree to which this new form of phenomenal realism has distanced itself from epistemological concerns. After all, our discussion of the very direct manner in which contemporary non-reductive realists think their realist beliefs and claims are *justified* speaks to the peculiar place they take phenomenal properties to have in our epistemological life. As Chalmers (1996 p. 196) puts it, "Conscious experience lies at the center of our epistemic universe". Were Jackson's aforementioned analysis of 'appear'-words an exercise in pure linguistic analysis, concerned *solely* with the various linguistic *roles* such terms play, he couldn't *possibly* have made a case for the existence of sense-data *qua* phenomenal particulars, taken in the non-reductive realist's sense. Rather, he thinks a sense-data theory of the kind he endorses best articulates how the *indisputably true* "statements concerning ... looks and images" born of "attention to the phenomenology of visual perception" might be understood (Jackson 1977 pp. 106, 107).

The important sense in which this contemporary form of qualia realism breaks with epistemic role essentialism is twofold. Firstly, it is thought possible, by some such realists at least, for

¹⁹ Such a view might initially strike one as being totally at odds with the kind of realism about phenomenal properties currently under discussion, premised, as it is, upon an epistemic relation borne of immediate acquaintance. In Chapter 2, Sellars' view will be shown not just to be somewhat compatible with industrial strength phenomenal realism of this kind, but a somewhat plausible adjunct.

phenomenal properties to be instanced without playing any epistemic role at all. Chalmers (2010 pp. 287, 288) writes:

It is plausible that a subject can have phenomenal properties without having corresponding concepts, corresponding beliefs, or corresponding justification ... Acquaintance [with experience] is not itself a conceptual relation: rather, it makes certain sorts of concepts possible. And it is not itself a justificatory relation: rather, it makes certain sorts of justification possible. Phenomenal concepts and phenomenal knowledge require not just acquaintance but also acquaintance in the right cognitive background: a cognitive background that minimally involves a certain sort of attention to the phenomenal quality in question, a cognitive act of concept formation, the absence of certain sorts of confusion and other undermining factors (for full justification), and so on.

Chalmers (2010 pp. 285, 301) goes on to describe acquaintance with experience as a “nonconceptual epistemic relation”, but it is only epistemic inasmuch as it “carries the potential for conceptual and epistemic consequences”. Phenomenal properties need not play any epistemic role; they are merely *apt* to do so, which brings us to the second important sense in which the contemporary form of phenomenal realism under discussion breaks with epistemic-role essentialism. It is the nature of phenomenal properties that renders them thus apt. Their being thus apt isn’t *constitutive* of their nature.

For this reason, the recent attempt by Charles Siewert (2011 p. 246) to define the popular phenomenal realist locution ‘what it’s like’, and even the term ‘phenomenal’, in terms of a property’s *aptness* for a certain kind of knowledge or curiosity with respect to the property it in fact is, is somewhat perplexing.²⁰ The ordinary non-reductive realist would have it that what one can at least sometimes come to know by way of acquaintance with phenomenal properties, and, more importantly, what reductive accounts of consciousness fail to account

²⁰ Siewert (1998 pp. 66, 147), for the record, is a phenomenal realist who has shown a degree of sympathy for the non-reductivist cause.

for, is *what they are like*, their *phenomenal* nature. Siewert's (2011 p. 246) redefinitions have it there being something that it's like to have them is *just* their aptitude to be thus known, their being phenomenal *just* their being *non-derivatively* thus apt.²¹ This falls short of what such realists take themselves to have knowledge of when they speak of phenomenal properties and what they are like. They don't think they merely gain knowledge of the aptitude of such properties for being known that way. Neither does Siewert (2011 p. 245): "The "subjective knowledge" of features invoked is specifically a knowledge of *what features they are*". But he has shifted the meaning of talk of what such features are like and their phenomenal nature so as to refer, not to the features themselves, but their aptness for such knowledge. There is nothing to stop him from doing this, of course, but it's unclear that anything has been gained. The key debate centres upon the natures themselves, and if one ceases to use the terms already used for them, new ones will be necessary, and those already in use don't have the kind of *obvious* epistemic connotations that would justify such a meaning shift. Siewert (2011 pp. 245, 247) proposes such redefinitions because he thinks it preferable to taking the meanings of such locutions as primitive. For some non-reductive realist at least, such locutions refer to a nature not explicable in terms of something else, so they have to be.²²

There is also a *prima facie* case to be made that many phenomenal properties might *not* be apt for the kind of subjective knowledge Siewert speaks of. Consider the phenomenology one has when one looks at an optical art painting containing more than several hundred dots, making a manifestly futile attempt to ascertain at a glance exactly how many appearances of such dots inhabit your visual field. One's total phenomenal state, in such a case, is an incredibly

²¹ There's only *derivatively* something it's like to eat durian, but there's non-derivatively something it's like to have the relevant experience (Siewert 2011 p. 245).

²² For others, like Chalmers, they might be explicable in terms of a further intrinsic nature.

complex phenomenal property incorporating the very amount of dots that it, taken holistically, constitutes the phenomenology of failed comprehension of. For one to have subjective *knowledge* of the instancing of this *particular* property is for there to be a somewhat alarming dissociation between phenomenology and cognition, the possibility of which, in the least, seems questionable.²³

5. Reductivism and Dennettian Dissolution

In this section I present my reasons for taking a physicalist reduction of qualia to make difficult, in the dialogic context, the rejection of Dennett's own solution to the qualia problem. I do this in two stages. First, building on the background above I argue that to accept the Kantian distancing move (as some forms of physicalism do) is *prima facie* to accept the legitimacy of Dennettian dissolution. Second, I then argue that other forms of physicalism, based on a different characterisation of physical properties, are also vulnerable to Dennettian dissolution.

Suppose one were to be rationally converted in some way from unmediated topic-specific phenomenal realism to a mediated topic-neutral conception of the kind discussed previously. In such a case, presumably one can only say of one's prior convictions regarding one's unmediated topic-specific contact with phenomenal property instances that they were *mistaken*. In order to force a fit between experience and whatever it is taken to reduce to, the proponent of role-theoretic reduction must trade intransigent features of experience for mistaken *thoughts* that experience has those features. For the avid phenomenal realist, then,

²³ Chalmers (2012a p. 114) touches upon this issue in his recent constructivist manifesto, *Constructing the World*, in the midst of a discussion of his Cosmoscope, a device for delivering fundamental physical, phenomenal and indexical truths to an idealized rational subject that might thereby reason its way to most, if not all, other truths. Regarding how the cosmoscope might deliver phenomenal information, he writes, "One could think of the Cosmoscope as simply inducing the relevant experiences (that is, phenomenal states) in the user ... But there may be difficulties: if we are simulating certain states of anger or stupor, entering into such a state may undermine the capacity for reasoning" (Chalmers 2012a pp. 115, 116).

to accept the feasibility of Kant's distancing move will be one and the same as accepting the feasibility of Dennettian Dissolution in this case.

Were the foregoing characterisation of physical theory as an *opaque* description of reality universally accepted, it would seem that any reduction of phenomenal properties to physical properties would be a *deflationary* form of reduction, one that takes experiences to be something *less* than naive phenomenology would suggest. No amount of topic-neutral role-theoretic information, the kind of information about red experiences that Mary can be apprised of while still in her black and white room, can ever entail the kind of topic-specific information about intrinsic natures seemingly betrayed by our actual experiences of redness. An endorsement of such reduction would therefore constitute a tacit endorsement of Dennett's strategy. But not everyone accepts such a characterisation of physical theory. Some instead maintain that the role-theoretic characterisation of reality bequeathed by a complete and correct physical theory would be an *exhaustive* description of reality. The network of role-theoretic *relations* articulated by such a theory needn't have further *intrinsic* realisers.²⁴ The network of relations is all there is. Physics, in such a case, is *topic-specific*.

An advocate of this conception of physics is still in a position to embrace the Kantian distancing move, that is, to endorse a reductivist account of experiencing that eschews its topic-specific immediacy, but this would likewise be one and the same as embracing Dennettian Dissolution. Might a physically reductive phenomenal realism premised upon this conception of physical properties be capable of accounting for the *topic-specific* acquaintance with phenomenal properties that philosophers like Chalmers and Strawson claim to have? Chalmers, at least, has no problem with the property instances with which his experience constitutes immediate contact having *non-phenomenal* constituent realisers. What prevents

²⁴ For a defense of such a view, see Chapter 3 of Ladyman & Ross (2007).

physical properties, thus characterised, from being the constituent realisers of such properties? Might this form of physicalism be compatible with a *non-deflationary* phenomenal realism, one which at no point invokes Dennett's strategy?

In this case, it's not the mere immediacy of experience that Dennettian Dissolution must be invoked to do away with; it's the *properties* immediately given. In making his case for the irreducibility of experience to physical properties, Chalmers (1996 p. 118) draws attention to the essentially structural-cum-dynamical nature of physical theory:

... the basic elements of physical theories seem always to come down to two things: the structure and dynamics of physical processes. Different theories invoke different sorts of structure. Newtonian physics invokes a Euclidean space-time; relativity theory invokes a non-Euclidean differential manifold; quantum theory invokes a Hilbert space for wave functions. And different theories invoke different kind of dynamics within those structures: Newton's laws, the principle of relativity, the wave equations of quantum mechanics.

Immediately hereafter he provides the grounds for the incompatibility of the kind of phenomenal realism he endorses with a theory of reality cast solely in these terms:

But from structure and dynamics, we can only get more structure and dynamics. This allows the possibility of satisfying explanations of all sorts of high-level structural and functional properties, but conscious experience will remain untouched. No set of facts about physical structure and dynamics can add up to a fact about phenomenology.

Taken as intended, Chalmers' claim that structural-cum-dynamical facts never alone entail non-structural-cum-dynamical facts is relatively uncontroversial. The one remotely plausible objection to such a claim comes from the advocates of the view opposed to the one presently under consideration, who maintain that *all* facts of the instantiation of structure entail the

existence of an *intrinsic nature* thus structured,²⁵ and sometimes, additionally, that all facts of the instantiation of dynamics entail an *intrinsic ground* for those dynamics.²⁶ Chalmers most definitely doesn't wish to weigh in against such claims.²⁷ His point is rather that there is no level of complexity at which *purely* structural-cum-dynamical facts neatly segue into non-structural-cum-dynamical facts, and the natures immediately given in experience, he maintains, *aren't* exclusively structural cum dynamical.

Consciousness, no doubt, admits of structure. It is *phenomenal* structure, but it's not immediately obvious that this presents any kind of problem for reduction, so long as the constitution of the phenomenal by the non-phenomenal is yet to be ruled out. Structural types are constituted by altogether different structural types all the time. Consciousness also possesses dynamics, at least in the sense that we experience dynamical temporal phenomena, motion, change etc. Once again such dynamics seem distinct from the nomological dynamics of physical theory,²⁸ but were consciousness to consist only of said structure and dynamics,

²⁵ Foster (2008 p. 82), for instance, speaks of “the intrinsic nature of physical space that transcends its geometrical structure – that aspect that forms the qualitative nature of the thing that possesses the geometrical structure”.

²⁶ For a structural Humean like David Lewis (1986a pp. ix-xii), the intrinsic grounding of structure suffices for the intrinsic grounding of dynamics (Blackburn 1990 p. 65). For others, like Strawson (2008), the intrinsic grounding of dynamical facts requires the instantiation of intrinsic non-Humean “propensities” or “powers”.

²⁷ Chalmers (2012a pp. 350, 352) has expressed a degree of sympathy for what he calls ‘graspable thick quiddities’, intrinsic ‘substantial natures’ with respect to which it is possible to form a “*quiddistic concept*: intuitively, one that picks out the property not by its role but by its intrinsic character”.

²⁸ Our experiences hardly admit of the kind of patterned consistency that would allow some kind of Humean nomology to be read off them. Experiences aren't ordinarily thought to have an internal nomology, but rather, to be subsumed within a greater nomological order. (Leibniz's monads had an internal nomology, appetition, but they were hardly straightforward phenomenal manifolds. Each one bore all the complexity of the universe, and the majority somehow extended into non-consciousness (trans. Rescher 1991 pp. 18, 19)). Experiences betray an *appearance of law-like-ness* inasmuch as their phenomenal character is such as to give the sense of immersion in a nomically well-behaved world, but this is not to be conflated with the *law-like-ness of appearance*. That our experiences don't admit of non-Humean dynamical features might be thought the upshot of the infamous historical catalyst for Humeanism, Hume's claim that experience never betrays any kind of necessitation relation between successive contents. Howard Robinson makes the following comment in response to the Philpapers survey question ‘Laws of nature: Humean or non-Humean?’: “In the empirical world it is Humean, but this is underpinned by Divine Will. That is, Berkeley is correct which both is and is not Humean” (Profile for Howard Robinson). This view has been challenged recently by Strawson (2006b p. 243), who maintains that the categorical phenomenal properties of our experiences are literally identical to non-humean necessitating powers: “Energy is experientiality; that is its intrinsic nature”. There are reasons for thinking such a view might not be incompatible with non-deflationary acquaintance-based phenomenal realism in the way it might initially appear.

what better non-phenomenal constituents could it have than the pure structure and dynamics of physical theory? But non-reductive realists are wont to maintain that such structural and dynamical aspects of experience *don't* exhaust its experiential nature. Whether or not *physical* structure and dynamics have intrinsic realisers, *phenomenal* structure and dynamics do. Chalmers (2010 p. 22) writes, “There are properties of experience, such as the intrinsic nature of a sensation of red, that cannot be fully captured in a structural description”. Elsewhere he suggests that the structural properties found in experience “may be reducible structureless *phenomenal* properties and their relations” (Chalmers 1995 p. 398). The dynamical element in experience, in turn, might be described as the experiencing of change in these properties and relations.²⁹

These intrinsic natures rule against the reduction of experiences to physical properties as presently characterised, not only on account of their being non-structural, but also on account of their sheer intrinsicality, that is, their stand alone existence. The view of physics under consideration is one which admits of massive constitutive interdependency: everything is constituted *solely* by its place in an all encompassing network of role-theoretic *relations*. But acquaintance based realists take themselves to be acquainted with the *existence* of their own experiences *without* being acquainted with the existence of any larger tract of reality, which would suggest that the existence of their experiences is a fact that is independent of any role-theoretic relations their experiences might stand in with respect to the broader metaphysical community.³⁰

These will be discussed in Chapter 3. I'll eventually present an argument, albeit in a footnote in Chapter 6, that it *is* thus incompatible.

²⁹ I think this more primitively dynamical conception of phenomenal temporality is more phenomenologically accurate than the “appearance of succession” conception that has gained more traction in the literature. I'll have more to say on this in Chapter 4.

³⁰ Once again, I am implicitly assuming that immediate acquaintance with the existence of something requires immediate acquaintance with something constitutively sufficient for its existence, and Chalmers' panprotopsyism seems in breach of this. Once again, I'll flag my upcoming defense of this claim in Chapter 3.

Just as the advocate of the view that our relation to experiences is mediated must invoke Dennettian Dissolution to explain away the seeming immediacy of experience, the advocate of a purely structural cum functional account of phenomenal properties, whether or not he or she takes experiencing to constitute an immediate relation to them, must invoke Dennettian Dissolution to explain away the putatively intrinsic and non-structural aspects of experience. Once again, what else can the advocate of such reductionism say about Chalmers' conviction that he is acquainted with non-structural or intrinsic properties other than that he is *mistaken*? It appears that *any* attempted reduction of phenomenal properties to physical properties must involve the invocation of Dennettian Dissolution with respect to some aspect or other of consciousness as it is characterised by the more avid realist. David Lewis is clear on this score. In 'Should a Materialist Believe in Qualia', he claims it is part of "the folk-psychological concept of qualia" that "we know exactly what they are – in an uncommonly demanding sense of 'knowing what'". He thinks materialists can help themselves to an ersatz notion of qualia, of "imperfect but good enough deservers of the name", that preserves most aspects of the concept whilst eschewing this one, and that "a conservative materialist" might therefore be within her or his rights to say that "qualia exist but are not quite as we take them to be" (Lewis 325, 329).

Has Lewis made a compelling case for the feasibility of Dennettian Dissolution? Arguably not, as contemporary non-reductive realists would likely accuse him of the kind of equivocation Chalmers accused Dennett of at the outset. There is indeed a sense in which such realists would say that phenomenal properties are exactly as we take them to be, but it is a sense that has nothing directly to do with knowledge. Such a claim, much like claims involving 'seems', 'appears' etc, can be taken in two different ways. The 'taking' involved

might be intellectual – phenomenal properties are exactly as we think/believe/are-disposed-to-judge them to be – or experiential – they are exactly as we experience them to be. They are most definitely committed to the latter. Experiences are exactly as they are experienced to be, that is, they instantiate the very phenomenal properties of which they constitute the experiencing. In contrast, such realists would likely consider Dennett a counterexample to the claim that qualia are exactly as we think/believe/are-disposed-to-judge them to be. None of them, in spite of the jibes, actually believe he’s a zombie. Siewert (1998 p. 179) writes, “Philosophy may be unwholesome, but you don’t literally go blind from it”. Rather, they think he thinks/believes/is-disposed-to-judge that his experiences aren’t as they actually are.³¹ But the fact that qualia aren’t exactly as we *judge* them to be doesn’t give us licence to claim they aren’t exactly as we *experience* them to be.

6. In for a Penny, In for a Pound

For now, rather than asking whether any kind of compelling case for Dennettian Dissolution can in fact be made, I would instead like to focus upon a more trivial point, namely, that *if* it works at all, it works in a wide variety of cases (Lockwood 1993 p. 70). If one *ever* allows the explaining away of how things phenomenally seem in terms of mistaken thoughts in any given instant, one has given oneself over to Dennett’s strategy.³² This seemingly trivial point

³¹ Likewise, non-reductive realists would likely agree with Rorty’s (1979 p. 29) claim that “in the case of phenomenal properties there is no appearance-reality distinction”, provided ‘appearance’ is taken in its phenomenal sense, but if it is taken in this sense, then, contra Rorty, this *doesn’t* “amount to defining ... a phenomenal property as one which a certain person cannot be mistaken about”.

³² Lockwood (1993 p. 70) contends that even Dennett hasn’t entirely given himself over to this strategy: “After all, if it made sense to say what Dennett says about phenomenology, why couldn’t one undercut the entire mind-body issue, by contending that we merely *seem* to ourselves to be conscious? The appearance of consciousness is, so to speak, a cognitive illusion from which our merely unconscious brains are suffering”. Whether or not Dennett would be fazed by this possibility is uncertain. Much hinges on how committed he is to the ‘theoreticians conceit’ I’ll be discussing in Chapter 2. Dennett might well be happy for the very notion of *consciousness* to stand or fall on the basis of theoretical considerations. Having flagged the foregoing ‘solution’ to the mind body problem, Lockwood (1993 p. 70) writes, “there are places within the text ... where Dennett comes within a hair’s breadth of saying just that”. I will continue to characterise Dennett as an unabashed proponent of Dennettian Dissolution, though I will also, in Chapter 2, address his seeming reluctance acknowledge the potential consequences of his view.

is of some significance, as it is not uncommon to find *reductive* realists criticising Dennett for his more thoroughgoing application of a strategy they have already sanctioned. In response to Dennett's claim that "the richness of the world ... does not "enter" our conscious minds, but is simply available", Dretske (1995 p.113), a reductive realist, writes,

For anyone willing to admit that one object can "enter" a conscious mind, this seems false.

The ravishing detail of the world does not cease to exist when I close my eyes. My
experience of this ravishing detail does cease to exist when I close my eyes.

But for anyone who maintains, as non-reductive realists do, that experienced properties are *instanced in*, not merely *represented by*, our experiences, that our experiences *comprise* appearances of object surfaces and such, and this is surely what naïve phenomenology dictates, Dretske's reductive representationalism seems equally false. Yet if these purported aspects of phenomenology can be subject to Dennett-styled intellectual dissolution, why not the aspects Dretske remains attached to? Why can't it be the case that Dretske merely mistakenly believes experiences admit of ravishing detail? Herein lays Dennett's challenge to phenomenal realists of all stripes. If such realists concede that any aspect of phenomenology can be thus dissolved, it's difficult to see how they haven't set foot on a slippery slope bottoming out in Dennett's view. 'In for a penny, in for a pound', he might say. Advocates of physicalistic reduction, as we have seen, have little recourse, as they have already embraced Dennett's strategy. Non-reductive realists have shown greater vigilance in this respect, but they have also been prone to lapses. We have arguably already encountered such a lapse in our discussion of Ayer. Ayer maintains, on the basis of epistemic considerations, that visual experience merely *connotes* epistemically overwhelming complexity without *embodying* it. Presumably, he thinks those that maintain otherwise on the basis of a direct appeal to phenomenology are *mistaken*. In the next section, I'll discuss a more clear-cut example, that of the intellectual dissolution of depth phenomenology. I will then discuss the slightly more

complex and multifaceted example case of the historical tendency to invoke Dennettian Dissolution with respect to the more cognitive-cum-conceptual aspects of experience.

6.1 The Dennettian Dissolution of Depth

At the outset of his article ‘Space and Sight’, A. D. Smith (2000 p. 481) writes,

One of the most notable features of both philosophy and psychology throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the almost universal denial that we are immediately aware through sight of objects arrayed in three-dimensional space. This was not merely a denial of Direct Realism, but a denial that truly visual objects are even phenomenally presented in depth.

Howard Robinson is a somewhat rare contemporary defender of this view. Robinson maintains that depth is not “bedrock phenomenal”, but rather, a product of interpretation. Robinson is both a non-reductive realist and an outspoken critic of Dennett’s approach to the problem of consciousness (1994 pp. 193-202). But according to this view, while it intellectually seems as if it phenomenally seems that visual experience has depth, this is not the case. Our intellect has pulled a swifty on us, a very convincing one, so convincing that one could swear depth actually inhered in the manifold of visual appearances, which, we are assured, is 2-D. Surely allowing for such a possibility gives Dennett all the leverage he needs to likewise dissolve the remaining purported aspects of appearances. Robinson (1994 p. 198) suggests Dennett of presents a “false dichotomy”: “either there is a definite timeable conscious event in a Cartesian theatre, or consciousness is no more than the redrafting of what has been happening in the real world, with no conscious experience”. In defence of his intermediate position, which postulates a “phenomenal core”, subject to intellectual interpretation, he writes, “The core is needed because without it it is unclear why the various [interpretations] should come out as *experiences*” (Robinson 1994 p. 198). But if Dennettian Dissolution suffices to explain the seeming instantiation of phenomenal properties, and

Robinson appears satisfied with a Dennettian explanation of the seeming instantiation of phenomenal depth, this ceases to be a requirement. Experiences are adequately explained by mistaken thoughts that we have them.

Robinson (1994 p. 206) reassures us that it's not as though there's nothing that it's like for us for our intellects to pull the aforesaid swifty on us: "this intellectual difference constitutes a real phenomenal difference: it penetrates and structures the experience itself". If this structuring of the experience is a structuring of what the experience is like, how it phenomenally seems, then it is unclear what differentiates this position from one where visual experience phenomenally seems to have depth.³³ If it isn't, then it doesn't constitute a real phenomenal difference.

I have, of course, left out another option, that which Robinson is perhaps most likely to have meant. The phenomenal difference might be the additional phenomenology of the intellectual interpretation, over and above the phenomenology of the visual experience.³⁴ Chalmers (1996 p. 10) is right in saying "it is often hard to pin down just what the qualitative feel of an occurrent thought is", but we are generally inclined to think we can tell the phenomenology of intellectual activity from visual phenomenology, and apprehension of depth just doesn't seem, in any sense of the word, like something intellectual. If anything, this story is less satisfactory, as the addition of interpretation phenomenology just adds another layer to the Dennettian deception. Not only is phenomenal depth being dissolved into mistaken thinking; purportedly genuine phenomenology is occluded by this mistaken thinking. Depth seemingly inhering *phenomenally* in the visual manifold is being explained away in terms of properties which seemingly don't but actually do thus inhere leading us to mistakenly *think* it does.

³³ Such an interpretation is plausibly ruled out by Robinson's (1994 p. 207) claim that depth is "not given qualitatively in experience". Judgment-based *constitutivism* of this kind will be refuted in Chapter 3.

³⁴ This would explain Robinson's (1994 p. 207 emphasis mine) claim that "It seems to be a *phenomenological fact* that attitudes, beliefs and anticipations can enter into the structure and tone of the basic phenomenal field".

Meanwhile, we are said to *experience* the intellectual interpretation which, in combination with our 2-D visual phenomenology, dupes us into thinking visual phenomenology has depth, but having been successfully duped, we would be inclined say we experience no such interpretative process. Mistaken thinking is sufficient to explain away seemingly phenomenal depth *and* our phenomenology's seeming lack of interpretation phenomenology.

The attempted dissolution of phenomenal depth into mistaken thought makes for a nice case study on account of the *various* reasons that have been invoked in favour of it. Some of these reasons are somewhat peculiar to the case itself. Others have a more general significance inasmuch as they tie in with the pre-established theme of how the phenomenal realist might respond to various *theoretical* considerations. I'll briefly discuss two reasons of the former kind, if only to show them to be less than decisive, before focusing my attention on issues raised by the latter kind.

Advocates of two-dimensionalism often appeal to the fact that we often interpret 2-D images, i.e. paintings and televised images, as 3-D. The contestable point in this situation is that such apprehension is a matter of interpretation. In this case too, depth genuinely seems to inhere in visual phenomenology. A. D. Smith (2000 p. 487) says the following regarding Locke's appeal to this line of argument,

... it is a very poor reason for drawing his conclusion. Indeed, it is no reason at all ... Locke gives no reason for phenomenologically construing seeing a globe in terms of (an unargued interpretation of) seeing a trompe l'oeil painting, rather than construing seeing such a painting in terms of (our ordinary, phenomenally 3-D experience of) seeing a real globe.

Locke's argument is rendered particularly unconvincing when one considers the canonical 'arguments for sense-data'. Locke's reason for invoking interpretation is that the trompe l'oeil painting isn't itself three-dimensional. But the principle underwriting the arguments from illusion and hallucination has it that whether or not a phenomenally apparent property inheres

in a physical object, the property is nonetheless instantiated. Sense-data are therefore introduced as the *bearers* of illusory and hallucinated properties. Non-reductive-realists plausibly wish to retain this principle, whether or not they wish to postulate phenomenal particulars as bearers of such properties.³⁵

Another reason for Dennettian Dissolution that is somewhat peculiar to the case under consideration is put forward by Robinson. He thinks it “*ad hoc* and bogus” to “allow that depth is some extra inscrutable phenomenal property, not constructed from colour” (Robinson 1994 p. 206). This is a perplexing claim, as phenomenologically speaking, *none* of the phenomenal spatial dimensions seem to be *constructed* from colour. Phenomenal spatial properties and phenomenal colour properties might very well stand in a relationship of necessary co-instantiation, but this is different from saying that one of the two is the more fundamental constituent of the other. Chalmers (2010 p. 32) writes, “It is plausible that if one “subtracts” hue from a colour, nothing phenomenologically significant is left, but this certainly does not imply that colour is nothing but hue”.³⁶ Likewise, it is plausible that if one were to likewise “subtract” colour from phenomenology, nothing phenomenologically spatial would be left, but this doesn’t imply that phenomenal space is nothing but phenomenal colour. Robinson (1994 p 206) goes on to write, “Depth is supposed to be a further spatial dimension; so it must be the same sort of thing as the other two dimensions. It should not, therefore, be a *sui generis* feature of experience, but ought naturally to be the same kind of thing as the other dimensions”. But the other two spatial dimensions, from a phenomenological perspective at least, are themselves *sui generis*. Whether or not

³⁵ One might favor an adverbial analysis of perceptual experience that treats such properties as modifications of acts or events of perceiving, sensing, experiencing or the like. For a defense of adverbialism, see Chapter 8 of Chisholm. For arguments against adverbialism, see Jackson (1977 pp. 63-69).

³⁶ Chalmers (2010 p. 32) credits Gregg Rosenberg with having made this point to him in conversation in relation to an analogous claim from Dennett to the effect that nothing remains when one subtracts functional facts (a claim Chalmers, in any case, thinks there’s no reason to believe).

phenomenal spatial properties have further non-phenomenal constituents, they aren't *experienced* as being constituted by more basic *phenomenal* properties, as would be the case, for instance, with the phenomenal property of being the appearance of a dotted surface. Phenomenal depth is certainly no *more* inscrutable than phenomenal height and width. Robinson's adversary might just as easily treat his decision to single it out for special treatment as *ad hoc*.

We now arrive at the reasons for the Dennettian Dissolution of phenomenal depth that generalise more easily. Were the foregoing Robinson's *only* reason for advocating two dimensionalism, his adversary might likewise object that it's simply *ad hoc* to maintain that visual phenomenology is but a two dimensional array of colours when that's not how it's experienced to be. But Robinson is merely adding further potential reasons for subscribing to an established view, one that has often been advocated on the basis of *empirical* considerations.³⁷ Early advocates of two-dimensionalism thought perception's involving the impingement of light upon a two dimensional register confirmed their hypothesis, which seems quaint given that possibly all phenomenal realists nowadays who think perceptual consciousness the upshot of physical processes would think it an upshot of processing some way downstream from this initial impingement (Smith 2000 pp. 489-492). It has also been advocated as a means of accommodating certain experimental results, such as those concerning "Molyneux subjects" (Smith 2000 p. 493-497).³⁸ But if the results yielded by

³⁷ Though a soon to be discussed *a priori* consideration would appear to be Robinson's (1994 p. 206) principal reason for adopting the view.

³⁸ Molyneux subjects are subjects potentially capable of answering Molyneux's question, made famous by Locke (1961 p. 114). Locke's (1961 p. 114) friend Molyneux asks whether someone who was born blind but had his or her sight restored in adulthood would be capable of recognizing shapes he or she could recognize tactually by way of sight alone. I refer the reader to Smith (2000 pp. 493-497) for an assessment of the empirical plausibility, or lack thereof, of the various conclusions drawn from such research. I will instead be making relatively *a priori* points regarding the implications of accepting two-dimensionalism on the basis of such research.

empirical experiments were such as to be able to adequately justify Dennettian Dissolution with respect to depth, why not *other* intransigent aspects of experience? Dennett's reason for advocating such dissolution in the first place, after all, is that there is no place for qualia in our best empirical theories, so to make such a concession in the case of depth is to put him in good stead to win the qualia war. It's by no means clear that such a concession *must* be made. To be *conclusive*, the relevant empirical evidence could be nothing short of an *empirically revealed* fact other than that of how visual phenomenology purportedly seem to us, three dimensional that is, that shows it couldn't reasonably be thought to be that way, a tough call given that non-reductive realists tend to offer no clear conception of a fact that might necessitate the instantiation or non-instantiation of a phenomenal property other than its actual instantiation or non-instantiation.³⁹ The relevant arguments invariably refer to certain physical facts, or facts about experiences in certain, oftentimes pathological, cases, neither of which, as far as the non-reductive realist is concerned, *necessitate* any further phenomenological fact. It might be argued that it is too much to ask that such evidence render two-dimensionalism necessary; it need only render it plausible, or more likely to be the case than otherwise. But given non-reductive realists insist on their having experiences *as they characterise them* in spite of the findings of the physical sciences, most notably that those sciences reveal no such things, and are unperturbed by the prospect of total zombies, let alone subjects whose phenomenologies lack what their phenomenologies in fact have, what it is about such arguments that should move them is less than clear. Such realists might also suggest that experience itself is the locus of *empirical revelation*, so to call it into question is to call all the empirical facts it reveals into question, including those that supposedly justify calling it into question. Russell (1954 p. 7) writes, "We must ... find an interpretation of

³⁹ Those of a dualistic leaning speak of physical states soliciting phenomenal states by virtue of laws, but laws are opaquely characterised as whatever must be superadded for such states to do so.

physics which gives a due place to perceptions; if not, we have no right to appeal to the empirical evidence”.

Two-dimensionalism has also been advocated on the basis of logical-cum-conceptual considerations. Berkeley (1962 p. 186) objected to the notion of phenomenal depth on the grounds that it would constitute a “line turned endwise to the eye,” the implication seemingly being that such an idea is somehow *incoherent*.⁴⁰ Might taking experience at face value be an affront to *logic*? It should be remembered that phenomenal properties are transcendently real, property instances in themselves, not conceptual constructs. It would be odd to say the least if some part of reality embodied logical incoherence in some kind of *de re* sense, being such that there was no way of bringing it under concepts that didn’t result in logical incoherence. That *phenomenal* depth, the depth that experience seemingly embodies, might be thus incoherent, incoherent prior to any conceptualisation, is a queer enough proposal to warrant a degree of incredulity. *Prima facie*, it seems far more likely that the manner in which it has been conceptualised has engendered confusion. Smith (2000 p. 488) thinks Berkeley’s objection trades on “an a priori misreading of the nature of the nature of depth-perception”. Such a misreading, he suggests, “is corrected simply by turning to our experience of such depth. We can appreciate how an experiential awareness of depth is visually possible by seeing how it is actual” (Smith 2000 p. 488). A likely explanation for the misreading is that ‘depth’ has its original usage in talk about the objective spatial properties of physical things, properties which, according to common lore at least, are non-experiential. It’s usage for the phenomenal property we have been calling phenomenal depth, like much of the phenomenal lexicon, is parasitic upon this more original usage. But this isn’t to say that the term means exactly the same thing in each case. Nor is it to say that the properties thus

⁴⁰ Admittedly, it’s not clear to me how this is so.

depicted behave in the same way. Nobody assumes that *phenomenal* colour properties are disposed to deflect light in the manner of their *physical* namesakes. In any case, if experience *did* in fact reveal *de re* inconsistency, it's unclear why the phenomenal realist's hand would be thus forced. What better reason for realism about *de re* inconsistency? At the end of the first book of *Appearance and Reality*, which is dedicated in its entirety to argument to the effect that all that we ordinarily assume some modicum of familiarity with is shot through with inconsistency of this kind, Bradley (1893 p. 132) writes:

Everything so far, which we have seen, has turned out to be appearance. It is that, which, taken as it stands, proves inconsistent with itself, and for this reason cannot be true of the real. But to deny its existence or divorce it from reality is out of the question. For it has a positive character which is indubitable fact, and, however much this fact may be pronounced appearance, it can have no place in which to live except reality.

6.2 Qualia as a Synthesised Noumenal Backdrop

As well as being moot for reasons cited previously, Robinson's complaint that phenomenal depth would be an *ad hoc* addition to visual phenomenology because it's not constructed from colour betrays yet another common mischaracterisation of visual phenomenology, namely, that it is but a coloured array. Depth, therefore, isn't the only component missing from his characterisation of visual phenomenology. Is visual phenomenology experienced as a *three* dimensional array of colours? No. As those of the phenomenological tradition have always been at pains to emphasise, our visual phenomenology reveals, or, even better, gives the sense of immersion in, the empirical world. We experience, not an array of colours, but an array of discrete objects, and other worldly phenomena besides.⁴¹ What's more, we experience objects *as* the kinds of objects they are, trucks as trucks, dogs as dogs etc, without

⁴¹ Fog, mist, and smoke count among such phenomena. The earth beneath us and the sky above us are also arguably not experienced as object surfaces.

prior conscious inference.⁴² Heidegger (1962 p. 207) writes, “What we ‘first’ hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle”.

Advocates of the 2D colour array have sometimes appealed to the Kantian notion of conceptual synthesis in attempt to reconcile such facts with their account, the idea being that the array is conceptually souped up by the mind, understanding or whatnot, so as to be empirical-world-giving in the manner thus described. Carnap (1967 § 100) writes:

The “given” is never found in consciousness as mere raw material, but always in more or less complicated connections and formations. The synthesis of cognition, i.e., the formation of entities, or representations of things and of “reality”, from the given, does not, for the most part, take place according to a conscious procedure.

The given of which Carnap speaks consists of arrays of qualitatively individuated properties distributed in the qualitatively individuated coordinate systems that constitute the possibility spaces of the various sense modalities, emotional space etc.⁴³ Cognitive augmentation of this qualitative aspect of consciousness, the aforementioned “synthesis of cognition”, purportedly has a veiling effect; one can’t see the given for the “connections and formations” thus produced (Carnap 1967 § 100). Qualia serves as a transcendental backdrop to synthesised phenomena, as a phenomenal variety of noumena, necessary for empirical-world-giving phenomena, but obscured by the synthesis producing it.

If this raw material isn’t found in consciousness as it is, what reason is there for thinking it’s in consciousness? What makes one think that such arrays of qualities lie behind the smokescreen of cognitive synthesis? They seem very much like the products of

⁴² In saying this I am not necessarily endorsing Siegel’s (2006 pp. 481-486) claim that experiences represent objective kind properties. Rather, I am acknowledging a form of *phenomenology* such that our best attempts to describe it are liable to invoke objective kind terms. I remain agnostic, for now, about what essential relations, if any, pertain between the phenomenology and the objective kinds ordinarily referred to with the terms thus invoked. I’ll have a little more to say on the issue of phenomenal representation in the next section, but a detailed discussion won’t take place until Chapter 6.

⁴³ The coordinate system constituting the possibility space of vision is a two-dimensional plane, the relevant possibilities being colour arrays (Carnap 1967 § 88, 115).

transcendental reasoning to the effect that consciousness must necessarily be the product of the synthesising of such a backdrop. What about consciousness makes it clear that this is the case? How it phenomenally seems? But isn't this obscured by cognitive synthesis that makes us find conceptual connections rather than 'raw' qualia? How it intellectually seems? But isn't this exactly what's obscuring the backdrop? That the synthesis of the given isn't a conscious procedure might protect this view from the kind of criticism levelled against interpretation phenomenology earlier, and make it at least superficially in keeping with the phenomenologist's point that we don't find ourselves consciously inferring worldly denizens from raw qualia, but it seems a straightforward conceptual truth that if it's not conscious, it's not experienced. So how does it explain *experience* being empirical-world-giving?

It's difficult to make sense of this idea of qualitative phenomena with conceptuality stirred in. Strict delineation of the phenomenal and the intellectual makes it difficult to fathom how one is augmenting the other. Perhaps, in postulating such a hydrophobic distinction, I'm mischaracterising Carnap's view. It seems unlikely, after all, that Carnap would think that there's nothing it's like for the given to be conceptually souped up. So we might once again have an intellectual difference making a phenomenal difference. Conceptuality might "penetrate and structure" the given in much the same way that Robinson (1994 p. 206) claims intellectual interpretation does the visual field in the case of depth. Obviously, the same pattern of argumentation used in the previous case applies here. If this difference is really a difference in what things are subjectively like, then, once again, unless one wishes to reduce phenomenal seeming to intellectual seeming, it's a qualitative difference. Once again, the difference could inhere in the phenomenal fields constitutive of the various sense modalities, or could be some kind of *sui generis* phenomenology of conceptuality or intellection. But it doesn't seem, in any sense of the word, as though it's *sui generis*. As the phenomenologists insist, it seems as though the phenomenal fields themselves open us up to the empirical

world, not as though there is a schism between the phenomena of the phenomenal fields and the phenomenology of intellectual interpretation, cognitive synthesis, or whatever. Is our intellect pulling another swifty, making it intellectually seem as though things phenomenally seem different to how they actually phenomenally seem? To concede that the intellect can dupe us thus is to make the kind of concession that finds us back on Dennett's slippery slope. There is also a regress problem. We can either think our intellect is duping us thus and there's nothing that it's like for it to do so, a strange view to say the least,⁴⁴ or concede that there's something it's like for it to do so. Where does this phenomenology inhere? In thought phenomenology? But it doesn't seem, in any sense, as though we have such phenomenology, so we must postulate a further act of intellectual deceit, and so on. But if the phenomenology of synthesis isn't *sui generis*, then it inheres in the various phenomenal fields along with the pure phenomenology it purportedly obscures; one aspect of what these fields are phenomenally like hides another aspect of what things are phenomenally like. The coherence of such an idea, of appearances veiling appearances that nonetheless appear, seems questionable.

6.2.1 The Cognitive-Phenomenological Revolution

This foregoing problematic is born entirely of the intuition that visual phenomenology, *qua* visual phenomenology, must be wholly constituted from canonical sensuous qualia, a view that conflicts with how things appear. In visual experience we encounter objects. They are coloured, no doubt, but they are also, for instance, discrete. Objectual discreteness is as real

⁴⁴ Though it's interesting to consider what makes such a view, i.e. the view that combines irreducible phenomenal seeming with intellectual seeming that misinforms us regarding this phenomenal seeming without there being anything that it's like for it to do so, counterintuitive. One reason might be that to concede that occurrent thoughts bereft of phenomenology might successfully misinform us about our phenomenology is to rend subjectivity away from the phenomenal in such a manner that it's hard to see what reason one could have for phenomenal realism if one thought such rending away feasible. If one thinks, not just that one could be, but that one normally is, totally convinced one's phenomenology is other than it is by a thought with no phenomenology, it's hard to see what reason one might have for rejecting Dennett's line of reasoning.

and tangible an aspect of visual phenomenology as colour, and any attempt to dissolve such an aspect of phenomenology into something intellectual will run into the same problems we've already encountered. The term 'phenomenal' seems to connote the sensuous, but its contemporary philosophical meaning is broader, encapsulating all aspects of how things subjectively are. Once again, a degree of historical sense can be made of the intuition, however mistaken it might ultimately be. The term 'qualia' had a life prior to the what-it's-likeness debate spearheaded by Nagel, and was generally taken to mean phenomenal experience with all the intellectually or conceptually inflected aspects hosed out (Bayne & Montague 2011 pp. 6). In a sense, this notion of qualia was tailored to the naturalists. They could concentrate on naturalising the important cognitive stuff, and worry about the touchy-feely qualia bit last (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008 p. 108). Hence, naturalists such as Ryle, Smart and Putnam heartily endorsed such a conception of the phenomenal, making claims to the effect that a subject's consciousness says nothing about her or his intellectual life, not even whether or not he or she has one (Bayne & Montague 2011 pp. 6, 7). It was likewise in such naturalist's best interests to assimilate the newly emergent 'what-it's-like' talk to talk about qualia taken in its original *restrictive* sense. But such assimilation was unscrupulous, and it was only a matter of time before champions of the new form of phenomenal realism would take it upon themselves to put things right. Cognitive phenomenology, the what-it's-likeness of thinking, is quickly becoming a hot button issue in the philosophy of consciousness, with philosophers such as Siewert (1998 pp. 274-283), Strawson (2010 pp. 5-13) and Pitt (2004) championing the idea that there is a distinctive phenomenology of thought, understanding and such, a distinctively *cognitive* species of phenomenology.

But well entrenched metaphysical pictures are hard to shake, and one still finds, even among the champions of this cause, mischaracterisations of phenomenology born of a conception of the phenomenal manifold as wholly comprising of sensuous qualia and somehow 'standing

before' a non-phenomenally constituted mind. Consider, for instance, Chalmers' (2010 p. 269) talk of the difference between two subjects with *identical visual experiences*, one of whom *attends to* and *demonstrates* "a red quality in the right half of the visual field, and the other a green quality experienced in the left half of the visual field". He describes the difference between the two as a difference in the "cognitive backgrounds" constitutive of the respective acts of attention and demonstration, choosing to remain "neutral ... about whether such cognitive differences are themselves constituted by underlying functioning, aspects of cognitive phenomenology, or both" (Chalmers 2010 p. 269). Chalmers characterisation of attention and demonstration betrays the insidious influence of the 'mind exploring the manifold' conception of introspection, as it characterises visual experience as something that might remain static while a mind attended to various parts of it. One might say that it trades the *phenomena of attention*, which, as Sebastian Watzl (2010 p. 1) puts it, involves "the structuring [of] one's stream of consciousness so that some parts of it are more central than others", for *attention to phenomena*. In the case of visual attention, the structuring at issue is that of the visual field itself. The visual field comprises what is attended *as* attended and what is periphery *as* periphery, the periphery being characteristically ill defined (Watzl 2010 p. 21).⁴⁵ In making visual attention a matter of how a visual field undifferentiated in this manner interfaces with a cognitive background, Chalmers mischaracterises its phenomenology. Pulling the cognitive background within phenomenology is merely a phenomenalisng of the same perspectival error, akin to the phenomenalisng of depth yielding intellectual interpretation and Kantian synthesis discussed previously.

⁴⁵ Watzl might not agree that they are characteristically ill-defined. He writes, "The reason fringe experiences are phenomenally different from central experiences is not that their monadic phenomenal properties are different. Rather, they stand in a certain phenomenal relation to the other parts of your experience" (Watzl 2010 p. 30). I'm not sure I understand this claim. As far as I think I can understand it, I think it's false. I think peripheral and attended aspects of experience seem to differ in their intrinsic natures.

Though it is to be admitted that the foregoing criticism of Chalmers overlooks a possibility, namely, that Chalmers might not be trading the phenomenon of attention for attention to phenomena, but rather, allowing for the existence of *both*. As the floodgates are opened and philosophers start admitting the existence of various forms of so-called cognitive and conceptual phenomenology, the question arises of how exactly such phenomenology is related to *actual* cognition and conceptuality. At one extreme, there is *separatism*, according to which such phenomenology, at most, reliably covaries with certain actual cognitive activity, which is non-phenomenally constituted.⁴⁶ In such a case, a situation like that described previously, where one has the phenomenology of failure to account for an appearance while one's completely constitutively separate intellect in fact manages to account for it in full, might in fact be possible. The idea that seeming and actual cognition might come apart so violently is somewhat intuitively unattractive.⁴⁷

At the other extreme there is *constitutivism*, according to which such phenomenology constitutes cognition *and* its content.⁴⁸ This view is likewise beset with problems, though I will only briefly allude to them here, my comments serving as something of a promissory note with respect to the more detailed discussion of such issues in Chapter 6. When one speaks of the *content* of thought, one speaks of *intentional* content. That experience, in its experiential constitution, admits of intentional aspects, while only now gaining significant

⁴⁶ Putnam (1981 pp. 17, 18) could be said to be a separatist inasmuch as he acknowledges the differences to experience that cognitive factors typically make to phenomenology, but thinks the same phenomenology could be had in the absence of the attendant cognitive factors.

⁴⁷ It is to be noted that Chalmers (2012a p. 116), as pointed out in a previous footnote, has shown a degree of antipathy towards this possibility. He has also stated elsewhere “the mere act of attention to one’s experience transforms that experience” (Chalmers 1995 p. 413). I am therefore inclined, as per the previous paragraph, to attribute his talk of such purely cognitively differentiated acts of visual attention to an uncharacteristic lapse in judgement.

⁴⁸ Pitt (2009 p. 121) defends an attenuated constitutivism according to which phenomenal properties constitute intentional contents *qua* types, where “types are themselves mind-independent abstract objects”. In chapter 6, I’ll briefly explore a constitutivism according to which phenomenal properties constitute intentional contents *qua* experientially revealed instances.

traction within the analytic community,⁴⁹ has been a longstanding commitment within the phenomenological tradition. Gallagher and Zahavi (2008 p. 116) write, “phenomenology contends that consciousness is characterised by an intrinsic intentionality”. There certainly seems to be something it’s like to think about things, Spain, one’s neighbours etc. But there’s a case to be made for distinguishing this experienced *phenomenon of aboutness*, an aspect of the thought phenomenology *qua* phenomenology, an aspect it has solely in virtue of its *intrinsic* phenomenal constitution, and the more *realist* notion of the *aboutness of phenomena*, an aboutness relation borne by the thought experience to something *extrinsic* to how things phenomenally are for us, Spain, one’s neighbours etc. As discussed previously, the cognitive aspects of phenomenology often *connote* what they don’t *embody*.⁵⁰ Our conscious thoughts of Spain seemingly connote Spain without literally embodying Spain. Spain, the *real* Spain, presumably isn’t a constituent part of such thought phenomenology, not a *phenomenal* constituent at least. It doesn’t phenomenally seem as though Spain as a whole is instantiated in my phenomenology when I think of it. Not only are the *objects* thus connoted in thought phenomenology not phenomenologically embodied, the *intentional relation* to those objects also isn’t. How, after all, can the fact of the instancing of a relation stand apart from whatever constitutes the being of its relata?⁵¹ This peculiar ‘phenomeno-notional’ form of connotation isn’t even connotation in a *real* sense, as the latter is a *relation* actually borne to the thing connoted. Phenomeno-notional connotation even connotes, as opposed to embodying, the relation of connoting. It is, in its entirety, *pseudo-relational*.

⁴⁹ Kriegel 2013 is quite possibly the first significant edited volume on the topic.

⁵⁰ Throughout this thesis, I will use ‘embody’ in such contexts to refer to relations of *constitutive subsumption*, such that if *x* embodies *y*, then *y* belongs to the constitution of *x*. A qualification: when referring to *experiences* embodying things, properties etc, the intended meaning is that such experiences embody them *qua* experiences, such that the things, properties etc belong to the *phenomenal* constitution of the experience. (This last qualification becomes superfluous after Chapter 3, in which I argue that those who subscribe to the kind of phenomenal realism that is the focus of this thesis must also thereby subscribe to the view that the phenomenal constitution of an experience is its constitution proper).

⁵¹ For those that aren’t instantaneously struck by the impossibility of such a scenario, I’ll dedicate significant space to arguing for its impossibility in Chapter 5.

Anyone with even the slightest realist impulse is likely to balk at the prospect of the intentional objects of thought being entirely phenomeno-notionally constituted, there being nothing more to their existence than the existence of cognitive phenomenology which, in this queer yet perfectly familiar way, ‘suggests’ them. Almost all contemporary philosophers have something of a realist impulse, but the most important point for our purposes is that all *phenomenal realists* of the kind under discussion have at least a minimal realist impulse inasmuch as they are committed to transcendental realism regarding phenomenal properties. If their judgements about phenomenology are phenomeno-notionally constituted, they don’t have *real* intentionality, that is, they don’t *really* represent anything beyond their pseudo-relational phenomenological character, including any *phenomenology* that is *constitutively extrinsic* to their phenomeno-notional constitution. Consider one’s conscious thought that there is something that it’s like to experience *everything* you’re experiencing, a phenomenal manifold phenomenally unifying all the various elements of your experience such that there’s something it’s like to experience all of them together. Many phenomenal realists have *thought* as much, and naive phenomenology seemingly dictates that they are right to do so. But if their thoughts as such are mere components within such a manifold that phenomeno-notionally suggest a representational relation ‘to it’, without actually embodying such a representational relation, they seemingly aren’t the kinds of things that are *made true* by its nature. Siewert (1998 p. 192), an advocate of the view that phenomenology possesses *real* intentionality, writes “presumably, what would make one’s thought or experience true or accurate ... is what these are about or directed at”. By contraposition, if such thoughts and experiences *aren’t* really about or directed at something, that something *doesn’t* really make them true.⁵² Transcendentally realist representation is *real* representation, not pseudo-

⁵² Though it should be acknowledged that Siewert’s (1998 p. 192) own view is such that the aboutness and directedness of cognitive phenomenology to be a function of their truth-aptness, while the current discussion

representation. One might suggest that in such a case, the entire manifold is phenomenally demonstrated, and hence belongs to the phenomenal constitution of the thought as its demonstrated object. But this isn't convincing, as the phenomenology of *demonstrative* thought is likewise pseudo-relational. When I consciously think about *this* particular street that I'm in, the street doesn't actually inhere in the phenomenal constitution of my thought. Is my conscious thought of *this* phenomenal manifold any different? Does it somehow constitutively subsume the entire phenomenal manifold including itself so as to constitute one giant thought of itself? Seemingly not. My thought 'about' *this* phenomenal manifold definitely seems to be about *this* phenomenal manifold, but not in some sense altogether different to how my thought 'about' *this* street seems like a thought about *this* street. It merely phenomeno-notionally seems thus.

This discussion is incomplete as it stands. The foregoing characterisation of intentionality as a simple aboutness relation between a representation and that which it represents is something of an oversimplification, failing to account for the various forms of *misrepresentation* we assume ourselves capable of (Siewert 1998 p. 242). Proponents of phenomenal intentionality typically characterise phenomenal intentional content as a kind of 'narrow' content that makes a constitutive contribution to, but doesn't ultimately settle, 'wide' referential facts. A more detailed discussion of the issue of intentionality will have to wait until Chapter 6. What I wish to highlight for now is that separatism and constitutivism mark the extremities of a spectrum of views, and transcendental realism regarding phenomenal properties relies on a tenable account of *real* representation of phenomenal properties being located *somewhere* on that spectrum. If experience is to function as a *truthmaker* for the phenomenal realist's claims, judgements and beliefs to the effect that

might be taken to suggest the opposite. A more detailed discussion will have to wait until Chapter 6. For now, I merely wish to give a sense of the problematic.

experience exists in a real non-notional sense, that it *really* is as they say it is, and so on, such claims, judgements and beliefs must be the kinds of things capable of *really* representing experiences *qua* transcendently real existents. This will ultimately prove problematic.

7. Robust Realism

The foregoing discussion serves to highlight the theoretical importance of views that *consistently* avoid Dennett's strategy. It shouldn't be surprising if a committed non-reductive realist rejects any case whatsoever for Dennettian Dissolution premised upon considerations drawn from physics, or any other empirical theory. Such realists, in classic Cartesian fashion, take the existence of their own consciousness to be more certain than the existence of anything else, including anything thrown up by 'empirical' investigation. They are also likely to believe any such theories to be parasitic, epistemically speaking, upon the more primordial epistemic relationship borne to consciousness. Let us call acquaintance based phenomenal realism that outrightly rejects the Dennettian move in this way *Robust Realism*.

Robust Realism – Realism about phenomenal properties that (1) cites unmediated access to instances of such properties, rather than conceptually inflected reasons, as its justificatory grounds, and, (2) rejects outright all attempts to explain away aspects of phenomenology by way of Dennettian Dissolution.

This thesis is dedicated to the exploration and evaluation of this form of phenomenal realism. Although not often explicitly discussed, it is not a novel view. The work of a significant minority of contemporary philosophers is seemingly robust realist in spirit, whether or not they have ever explicitly formulated their view in such a manner,⁵³ and even if they occasionally mischaracterise phenomenology in a manner that might suggest otherwise (as

⁵³ A list of prominent robust realists writing within the analytic tradition would plausibly include David Chalmers, Barry Dainton, Charles Siewert and Galen Strawson. Many, perhaps most, of those working within the phenomenological tradition would also qualify.

Chalmers seemingly does with respect to attention). One can think experience is exactly how it immediately seems to be without thinking one will inevitably make correct judgements about how it thus seems, or doing so for that matter. I will now provide a brief summary of the content of the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, I make the case that the project undertaken in this thesis should be of interest, not just to members of the robust realist minority, but also to their deflationist rivals. The qualia debate, at present, comprises a dialogical standoff between two factions who are divided on fundamental issues relating to the norms of ontological commitment. While one privileges acquaintance-based certainty, the other places a premium on theoretical virtues. Members of each faction tend to base the case for their own allegiances, and against those of the opposing faction, upon considerations reflecting their own preferred norms. Each faction, in turn, has well rehearsed reasons for dismissing, or considering its position impervious to, arguments premised upon the norms favoured by the opposing faction. But members of each faction occasionally allow considerations referable to their preferred norms to be trumped by those referable to the norms of the opposing faction. This suggests a dialogical strategy, one carrying the potential to put an end to the standoff. It involves showing that *strict* adherence to such norms of the opposing faction comes at an undesirable cost. I point to the fact that there is already some reason to think Robust Realism might incur such undesirable costs, so deflationists would do well to abandon the championing of their own norms and start exploring the implications of those championed by robust realists.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the definitive commitments of Robust Realism entail the Constitution Thesis, a thesis regarding the constitutive nature of experiences. According to the Constitution Thesis, the constitutive nature of experiences is exhausted by their experienced nature. The argument I invoke in defence of this thesis has recently been criticised by Chalmers. I argue that Chalmers' criticism only works so long as one interprets

the premises in an implausibly ‘intellectualist’ way. The more natural ‘phenomenal’ interpretation allows for a successful demonstration of the Constitution Thesis’s entailment by fundamental robust realist tenets.

Spatiotemporal inclusion and causal interaction are the two principal means by which non-deflationary realists attempt to forge connections between experiences, as they characterise them, and a metaphysically real world. In Chapter 4, I argue that Robust Realism rules out both of these possibilities. First, I use the Constitution Thesis to argue that given some relatively commonplace assumptions about the nature of objective space and objective time, Robust Realism rules against experiences being located in such dimensions. I then explore more outré conceptions of the nature of space and time, and of the potential relations experiences might bear to these dimensions, arguing that the more plausible ideas here are ruled out by phenomenological considerations that the robust realist is forced to take seriously. Finally, I then turn my attention to causal interaction, arguing that given the lack of any prior spatiotemporal relations, two available accounts of causation remain, sustaining causation and a counterfactual theory premised upon a primitive conception of modality. I argue that the former is incoherent and the latter is queer enough to warrant dismissal pending any plausible arguments in its favour. The conclusion of the chapter is, then, that robust realism entails both that experiences are not located within a metaphysically real world, and that they cannot causally interact with such a world from without.

In chapter 5, I argue for a second thesis that will be used to draw further consequences for Robust Realism. According to the Relations Thesis, the pertaining of any relation must involve, for each relatum, something that would suffice as a truthmaker for the claim that it exists, or, if one’s ontology allows non-existent things, that there *is* such a relatum.

In Chapter 6, I then use the Relations Thesis to argue against the central tenet of the recently emergent Phenomenal Intentionality Research Program, that experiences are possessive of a

kind of narrow world-representing content *qua* experienced. An upshot of this is that cognitive phenomenology cannot constitute the transcendently truth-apt representations of phenomenal facts that Robust Realism is premised upon. I therefore turn to an evaluation of the plausibility of the claim that the immediate acquaintance relation underwriting Robust Realism is a relation borne to experience by a constitutively extrinsic intellect. The Relations Thesis, in combination with results argued for in Chapter 4, likewise rules out this possibility.

In a brief afterword, I discuss how the robust realist might respond to the arguments I have presented. I suggest that a path of resistance to Dennett might still be open, but it requires abandonment of transcendental realism regarding qualia for a kind of Kantian non-cognitivism.

8. Conclusion

Dennett's eliminativist strategy is somewhat more powerful than his detractors have typically acknowledged. It is an essential component in any physically reductive theory of consciousness, and has even been invoked on occasions by non-reductive realists. Robust Realism is acquaintance-based phenomenal realism that rejects all attempts to explain away aspects of phenomenology by way of Dennettian Dissolution. This thesis is dedicated to exploring the implications of such a view.

Chapter 2

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I made the case for the theoretical importance, as a form of principled resistance to Dennett's eliminativism, of the variety of acquaintance-based phenomenal realism that I have dubbed Robust Realism. I have not as yet established that Robust Realism *does* in fact constitute a principled form of opposition to Dennettian Dissolution, as I have not yet established that its outright rejection of Dennettian Dissolution is sufficiently plausible in itself. I do not need to make such a claim for the purposes of this thesis. Instead, I am claiming that if naturalists advocating various degrees of deflationism with respect to phenomenal consciousness are to have any hope of converting the more devout non-reductive realist, they would do better to abandon the well worn method of appealing to various empirical and theoretical considerations, in favour of an exploration of the implications of Robust Realism. The situation as it stands is that of a dialogic standoff between two parties, each of which either doesn't take the other's evidence seriously, or at least not as seriously as the other thinks it should. There is more than a little truth to the comments from David Lewis to be found on the back cover of Chalmers' *The Conscious Mind*:

Legions of materialists are no doubt busy writing their rejoinders; but there will be few points left for them to make that Chalmers hasn't already made. We of the materialist opposition cannot go on about how he has overlooked this and misunderstood that – because he hasn't. All we can do is to disagree about which way the balance of consideration tilts.

I intend to capitalise on the kind of metaphorical language Lewis invokes here, that of the 'weight' of dialogical considerations causing the balance of considerations to tilt. This metaphor is utilised to some effect by John McDowell (1994 pp. 8, 9), who claims that *epistemically* speaking, we oscillate on a dialogical seesaw between what he takes to be an

intolerable epistemic givenism and a coherentism bereft of all empirical constraint and content. It is my contention that the participants in the *metaphysical* debate regarding qualia are likewise oscillating on an allegorical seesaw.

Section 2 considers how Dennett's exchange with Otto might have played out if Otto were more truculent in his Robust Realist convictions. Otto can plausibly insist that the existence of phenomenology is far more certain than that of the mistaken judgments Dennett posits. Dennett can in turn insist that any such claim to certainty is merely a key commitment in a dud *theory*. Otto's contention here seems right inasmuch as phenomenal facts are the only facts thought to be given with the kind of immediacy that might adequately found certainty regarding them. Dennett's contention in reply seems right inasmuch as the concept of experience upon which the qualia debate rests seems very much like the product of philosophical *reflection*, a fact which might seem to undermine the epistemic immediacy that Robust Realism is premised upon.

In section 3, I argue that Robust Realism can accommodate the late epistemological arrival of phenomenal concepts. The *phenomenal character* of experience is 'diaphanous', giving a subjective sense of immediate contact with worldly objects, as opposed to appearances thereof (Moore 1922 p. 25). There is no reason why it must occur to someone who has been disabused of the belief that he or she has unmediated contact with the world that he or she is nonetheless in immediate contact with appearances.

In section 4, I point out that while robust realists need not be concerned as to when, if at all, the concept of qualia is arrived at, they are committed to a particular account of what acquisition of the concept of qualia involves if and when it occurs. The peculiar nature of their account of phenomenal concept acquisition comes into view when one considers Wilfrid Sellars' myth of the genius Jones. A robust realist interpretation of Sellars' myth is liable to treat Jones more like a Zen master than a theoretician, inasmuch as his teaching method is apt

to prompt a realization that takes one beyond the very concepts it deploys. In section 4.1, I suggest that the schism one might imagine to emerge between Jones's conservative acolytes, who merely see him as a brilliant theoretician, and his Zen acolytes, who take his teachings to transcend theory in the foregoing manner, precisely mirrors that between deflationists and non-deflationists in the contemporary qualia debate. In section 4.2, I discuss the peculiar brand of 'tough talk' each party has developed so as to inoculate its position from the standard criticisms levelled against it by opponents, noting that any compromise here risks tilting the aforementioned balance of consideration in favour of one's opponent.

In section 5, I argue that inasmuch as both parties have shown a wavering commitment to their tough talk, a dialogical strategy suggests itself, that of holding one's opponents to their tough talk and showing such a commitment to carry unpalatable consequences. Obviously, this method is only viable inasmuch as there are such consequences. I make a provisional case for thinking deflationists have the upper hand here, and flag some of the heavy theoretical costs of Robust Realism that I'll be arguing for in Chapter 4. In section 6, I note that deflationists who take the time to familiarize themselves with Robust Realism might reasonably hope to uncover something even more damning than metaphysical costliness, namely, logical inconsistency. I flag the arguments developed in Chapter 6 to the effect that experiences, as Robust Realism characterizes them, cannot support the model of justification regarding phenomenal judgments that Robust Realism is premised upon.

2. Dennett and Otto Return

To get a better sense of the nature of this standoff, consider how the dialogue between Dennett and Otto might have played out if Otto showed the courage of his robust realist convictions, rather than begrudgingly allowing himself to be browbeaten into submission, as

he is in Dennett's actual dialogue.⁵⁴ In response to Dennett's claim that "there is no such phenomenon as really seeming", Otto might simply reply, "Of course there is. We really have experiences, and how things phenomenally seem is how those experiences really are".

Dennett, of course, will insist that Otto just wrongly believes it to be the case that things really seem however he thinks they do to him, and will maintain that such mistaken beliefs are explicable on his own theoretical terms. In doing so, he hasn't *won*. Otto might just as easily reappeal to his putative truthmaker, maintaining that phenomenal consciousness seems far more of a sure fire thing than the non-phenomenal judgements of which Dennett claims it is a mere intentionally inexistent object. Of course, Dennett would likely put any such incorrigibility claim down to confusion, hubris or some combination of the two, rejecting any such epistemic foundationalism in favour of a kind of naturalising coherentism. He would likely reply that the epistemic immediacy of experience is merely a key commitment in a dud *theory*.⁵⁵ Regarding the thesis that we are able to directly identify our qualia, Lewis (1999 p. 328) says that while others "think it gets built into folk psychology because it is so obvious", he thinks "it seems obvious because it is built into folk psychology". Such is Dennett's view, a view well summarised by Putnam (1981 p. 102): "*qualia* belong to our 'second class conceptual scheme'". Still, at this point, the balance of consideration is not yet tipping. As we shall see, there's more to be said in favour of the considerations cited by both parties – in favour, that is, both of Otto's claim that the existence of phenomenology seems more certain than non-phenomenal judgement *and* of Dennett's claim that our notion of phenomenal consciousness is born of theory, not immediate acquaintance. I will begin by setting out Otto's case, addressing considerations cited by Hintikka for the somewhat different

⁵⁴ Lockwood (1993 pp. 67-70) utilizes the same rhetorical strategy, though to somewhat different ends.

⁵⁵ The term 'theory' is to be afforded a relatively inclusive sense in what follows, meaning something like an 'intellectual take' on something, however rigorous and well developed. A 'ways of seeing things', inasmuch as the 'seeing' involved isn't the having of visual phenomenology, but rather, the having of an intellectual perspective, counts as a theory in this broad sense.

conclusion that Cartesian certainty can only be had with respect to intellectual activity, (not, for instance, the sensory aspects of consciousness), and arguing that they are unconvincing. I will then make the case that there's something to Dennett's claim as well, as the *concept* of qualia seems only to emerge in the wake of certain forms of critical reflection. I will then make the case that Robust Realism is perfectly compatible with this possibility, but that the robust realist must endorse a particular account of what happens when the concept does thus emerge, differentiating the 'Zen' account they must endorse from the deflationism friendly 'business as usual' account.

2.1 Is Phenomenology More Certain Than Judgement?

Otto's contention, at the least, has historical precedent. Cartesian certainty has never been thought to extend to *unconscious* thought. On the contrary, some have argued for the existence of cognitive phenomenology by way of an "appeal to the role that cognitive-phenomenological properties might play in accounting for the kind of epistemic access we have to our conscious thoughts" (Bayne & Montague 2011 p. 23). Joseph Levine (2011 p. 118) writes "If we do indeed have indubitable knowledge – if I can tell without possible doubt from the inside that I'm genuinely thinking, with genuine content – then I would be inclined to accept that this somehow must be a matter of phenomenal access". If, by *genuine* content, Levine means *real* representational content, we have already come upon reason to think such *phenomenal* access problematic. But the claim that *if* any such certainty *were* to be had, it *would* be had by virtue of such immediate access, has a degree of plausibility.

Experience, after all, is the only form of epistemic access that is thought to place a subject in an *unmediated* relationship with what constitutes the pertaining of particular *facts* regarding reality. Hence Chalmers' (1996 p. 196) appeal to the *fact* of his having a red experience as justification for his belief that he is having it. To the degree that one falls short of an immediate relation to what constitutes the truth of a claim, one has fallen foul of certainty,

being beholden instead to various forms of epistemic *mediation* (Chalmers 1996 p.195). If genuinely contentful thoughts aren't immediately given in experience, Cartesian certainty plausibly doesn't extend to them, or, at least, it *shouldn't*. Descartes himself, as Robinson (1994 p.11) points out, was still very much “operating within a scholastic framework”, and was “quite clear that ideas possess what he calls ‘objective reality’, which means that it is part of their essential nature to have an object—that is, to be *of* something”. Robinson (1994 pp. 1, 11) contrasts this with the “*classical or empiricist conception of sense contents*” that historically followed, and to which he is more sympathetic, which has it that “sense-contents possess no intrinsic intentionality”. In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed an intermediate view, which has it that experience does admit of an intrinsic intentionality of sorts, but it is no more like real objective intentionality than the so-called colours intrinsic to experience are like objective colours. A comparative evaluation of these views will have to wait until Chapter 6. What matters for now is that a plausible Cartesianism will treat the phenomenal, not the mental in some more intellectual sense, as the arena of certainty. Hence one finds Chalmers responding to Bayne's (2001 p. 414) contention that we can't ever be certain that the requisite non-phenomenal “background conditions” for “full justification” of our phenomenal judgements are in place, as follows:

Even if an acquaintance theorist accepts that we can't be certain that we're justified, that merely shows that one can't rule out skeptical scenarios in which one's belief in the experience is not fully justified; it doesn't show that one can't rule out sceptical scenarios in which the experiences are not present. Presumably an acquaintance theorist can hold that we're certain about qualia but not about such *cognitive* matters as full justification, so that we

can rule out skeptical scenarios without qualia, but not those without full justification

(Chalmers n.d.).⁵⁶

Hintikka has argued that a proper understanding of Descartes' famous dictum, 'cogito ergo sum', yields virtually the opposite conclusion. He claims that Descartes took advantage of the fact that "the meaning of the verb *cogitare* was traditionally very wide" in order to "smuggle more content into his "result": "the word *cogito* may still be replaced by such verbs of intellection as *dubito* (or *profero*) but not ... by verbs referring to arbitrary mental acts such as *volo* or *sentio*" (Hintikka 1991 pp. 161-164). His reason seems to be that only an act of *thought* can yield what he calls "existential inconsistency", where "*p* is *existentially inconsistent for the person referred to by a to [think or] utter* if and only if '*p*; and *a* exists' is inconsistent (in the ordinary sense of the word)". He takes such inconsistency to be what turns Descartes' act of doubting his existence into a *demonstration* that he does in fact exist. That the act of doubting itself constitutes a demonstration is the key issue for Hintikka, as he is attempting to advance a *performative* interpretation of Descartes' dictum (as opposed to the *inferential* interpretation that its surface grammar naturally suggests). He acknowledges that the inferential interpretation, which treats 'I think' as the *premise* from which 'I am' is *inferred*, "expresses one of the things Descartes had more or less confusedly in mind when he formulated his famous dictum", but thinks it "important to realise that this interpretation is defective in important respects. It does not help to elucidate in any way some of Descartes's most explicit and more careful formulations" (Hintikka 1991 p. 149). He maintains that the "most interesting interpretation" is one according to which the dictum expresses the insight born of a particular kind of *performance*.

⁵⁶ Let it be noted that not only does Chalmers think an acquaintance theorist can hold this view, he in fact does hold this view, rejecting what he calls the "CJ" thesis, which is "analogous to the "KJ" thesis that knowledge requires knowledge that one is justified, but with certainty instead of knowledge" (Chalmers n.d.).

The inferential interpretation is straightforward enough. The singular premise, ‘I think’, takes the form ‘ Pa ’, and the conclusion, I am, the form ‘ $(\exists x)(x=a)$ ’ (Hintikka 1991 p. 147). The conclusion follows from the premise in classical first order logic on account of the fact that ‘ $Pa \rightarrow (\exists x)(x=a \wedge Px)$ ’ is a provable formulae, from which ‘ $Pa \rightarrow (\exists x)(x=a)$ ’ can be derived, from which, in conjunction with the premise, the conclusion can be deduced by *modus ponens* (Hintikka 1991 pp. 147, 148). Unfortunately, the conclusion doesn’t follow from the premise because thinking entails existence, but because classical first order logic has built in “existential presuppositions”, i.e. it behaves as if “all singular terms ... designate actually existing individuals” (Hintikka 1991 p. 148). One cannot so easily derive ‘I am’ from ‘I think’ in a free logic, which contains no such presuppositions (Hintikka 1991 p. 149). And this is plausibly the kind of logic applicable in such a situation, where something’s existence is at issue. Hintikka (1991 p. 149) writes, “Hamlet did think a great many things; does it follow that he existed?”

In contrast, Hintikka’s performative interpretation of Descartes’ dictum rests upon the aforementioned notion of existential inconsistency. On this interpretation, ‘*Cogito ergo sum*’ expresses the insight born of a performative act, Descartes’ doubting of his own existence (Hintikka 1991 pp. 154, 155). The idea seems to be that the absurdity of such doubt is made *manifest* in the act of doubting, such an act being, in Hintikka’s (1991 p. 151, 152) words, “awkward”, or “curiously pointless”. But why should this be so? The absurdity of an existentially inconsistent thought or utterance is seemingly due to the content of the thought or utterance tokened being a denial of the very conditions of its tokening, Descartes’ existence supposedly being a requisite condition of the instancing of the doubtful thought. Descartes’ assumption that his existence *was* in fact a requisite condition of the instancing of such a thought has proven contentious. Georg Lichtenberg famously objected that at most,

Descartes had demonstrated the existence of thinking (Newman 2014). Sidestepping entirely the vexed issue of what constitutes the being of a self or subject, does the instancing of a thought that constitutes a denial of the very conditions of its tokening amount to a demonstration of its falsity? Seemingly not. Such a situation might pertain without being *manifest* in such a way as to constitute a *demonstration* of its own absurdity. If a dualist *thinks* that thoughts aren't physically constituted when in actual fact they are, or a physicalist *thinks* thoughts *aren't* non-physically constituted when in actual fact they are, a thought is instantiated, the contents of which constitute a denial of the conditions facilitating it. The thinking of such a thought need not, and plausibly *would* not, constitute a demonstration of falsity of that very same thought for the subject that thinks it. For inconsistency of this kind to serve as a *demonstration* of the indubitable existence of *thought*, as opposed to the self, it must be *manifest* that one is thinking when doubting the existence of thought. Descartes (1988 p. 130) considered this unproblematic, as he thought it "self evident" that "there can be nothing in the mind, in so far as it is a thinking thing, of which it is not aware". This thesis seems true of the *phenomenal* mind, inasmuch as it seemingly comprises a unified phenomenal manifold such that one is immediately phenomenally aware of all of it at once. In contrast, it's less than clear that it applies with respect to intellectual awareness. In fact, the idea seems *prima facie* problematic. Presumably, to be intellectually aware of something is to somehow be thinking of it. We have no other readily available conception of intellectual awareness. So this principle, if applied to extra-phenomenal intellectual awareness yields an infinity of thoughts of thoughts. Not all such regresses are vicious of course, but it also happens that the idea that every thought is in turn thought also isn't widely accepted. In fact, one popular deflationary conception of phenomenal properties has it that they are the *particular* aspects of our mental activity that have a 'higher order thought' directed upon them, the implicit assumption being that there are aspects of our mental activity that don't

(Chalmers 2010 p. 531). At the least, the advocate of such a view bears a significant burden of *explanation*.

But even if sense can be made of such a view, it is unclear how this would threaten Cartesian certainty with respect to phenomenology, both intellectual and non-intellectual. It is clear from the foregoing that what matters for such a performative demonstration is not the fact that the existentially inconsistent thought denies the conditions of its tokening, but that its falsity is *manifest* to the subject entertaining it in entertaining it. Such would be the case if one were to entertain the thought that one doesn't have visual phenomenology in spite of having immediate phenomenological contact with the 'falsity maker' for such a claim. It would appear that if anything presents a problem for such existential inconsistency, it's the possibility of the false thought itself being manifest. Hintikka might be right that the 'think' in Descartes' dictum can't be replaced by verbs 'sense' or 'feel', but he is wrong in saying that it was *unscrupulous* of Descartes to maintain that his method of demonstration secures certainty with respect to non-intellectual phenomenology.

2.2 Is the Concept of Qualia Arrived At Theoretically?

The foregoing section should suffice at least to establish that there are considerations that can be cited in favour of Otto's claim that the existence of phenomenology is more of a sure fire thing than the existence of the non-phenomenal mistaken judgements invoked by Dennett in his attempt to explain it away. What of my fictitious Dennett's claim that our notion of phenomenal consciousness comes by way of theory, not immediate acquaintance? The truth in this claim becomes clear when we consider what is *wrong* with the following characterisation of *bona fide* phenomenal realism by Galen Strawson (2011 p. 288): "A good way to convey what it is to be a real realist about experience is to say that it's to continue to take colour experience or taste experience, say, or experience of pain, or of an itch, to be what one took it to be wholly unreflectively – what one knew it to be in having it – before

one did any philosophy, e.g. when one was five”. Such talk of our five year old selves having a correct *knowledge* of the nature of our *experiences* that was somehow corrupted by later philosophical reflection is dubious, inasmuch as our five year old selves were unlikely to have any *concept* of experience in the sense intended. Plausibly, many adults without a philosophical background don’t, at least not in an *explicit* way.⁵⁷ Strawson (2011 p. 288) writes “Some doubt whether five year olds have the concept of experience, or sensation, at all. The way to remove this doubt is to discuss pins and needles or other odd sensations with them, or indeed with younger children”. But the fact that children use certain *words* deployed by phenomenal realists to refer to phenomenal consciousness, or aspects thereof, doesn’t mean they have the same concepts. Whether or not it ultimately constitutes a problem for them, J. L. Austin was right in accusing phenomenal realists of using countless terms in non-standard ways.⁵⁸ ‘Experience’, in everyday parlance, doesn’t neatly cordon off a peculiar set of essentially qualitative properties. One can experience being deceived, love, a war and so on. Similarly, the folk concept of a sensation is plausibly that of a bodily happening, not a modification of experience as the phenomenal realist conceives it. The idea of a person going through his or her entire life without entertaining the concept of experience upon which the qualia debate is centred doesn’t seem at all incoherent. This possibility might be thought to stand at odds with the supposed epistemic immediacy of phenomenal consciousness. If our knowledge of phenomenal properties is born of the most immediate and intimate epistemic relationship conceivable, why does our thought only turn to them after at least some degree of philosophical deliberation? In this sense, they seem very much like the products of *theory*.

⁵⁷ David Lewis (1999 p. 326), as we shall see, thinks the concept might already have been possessed inexplicitly by those that eventually arrive at a more explicit conception.

⁵⁸ This was one of the central themes of his *Sense and Sensibilia* (1962).

3. Diaphanous Experience and the Fall from Eden

But the robust realist is arguably in a position to explain the foregoing conundrum without conceding that phenomenal properties are merely theoretical postulates. In fact, their very commitment to the principle of fidelity to the nature of experience arguably forces them to acknowledge an aspect of experience that plausibly explains the situation. Moore (1922 p. 25) long ago plausibly suggested that experiences are *diaphanous*. We don't experience our experiences *as* experiences, phenomenal properties *as* phenomenal properties. Experiences, in their intrinsic nature, seemingly, in a phenomeno-notional sense of 'seemingly', constitute a world-bound subjectivity. A sincere attempt to take experience at face value will plausibly acknowledge that our experiences phenomeno-notionally connote all manner of things *other* than phenomenology, except, perhaps, in those rare circumstances where we have the phenomenology as of entertaining thoughts about phenomenology.

The robust realist might appeal to the diaphanousness of experience in order to explain how our concept of experience might arrive relatively late in the epistemological game, in spite of our bearing the most immediate and intimate of all epistemic relationships to it. Experience seemingly (in a phenomeno-notional sense, once again) puts us in immediate contact, not with itself, but with a world. The world it thus puts us in contact with is much like Eden in Chalmers' (2010 p. 381) epistemological adaption of the biblical myth of the Fall:

In the Garden of Eden, we had unmediated contact with the world. We were directly acquainted with objects in the world and with their properties. Objects were presented to us without causal mediation, and properties were revealed to us in their true intrinsic glory.

In Chalmers' (2010 p. 381) myth, the fall from Eden occurs when we eat from the "Tree of Illusion" and the "Tree of Science". The Fall, in this case, of course, is *epistemological*, not *literal*. We don't cease living in the world we lived in previously. We are disabused of the mistaken *belief* that we ever did live in such a world. It is perfectly compatible with Robust

Realism for somebody to be disabused of this idea without it immediately occurring to them that they nonetheless have unmediated contact with *something*. Questions like the one that so bothered the early sense data theorists – “What are the immediate objects of perception?” – need never arise (Jackson 1977 p. 6). Historically, of course, they did arise, but the possibility of them never arising for subjects who are nonetheless in unmediated contact with phenomenal properties doesn’t threaten Robust Realism in the least.

4. The Genius Jones: Theoretician or Zen Master?

The robust realist might just as easily endorse an account of phenomenal knowledge that has it arrive relatively late in the epistemological game, as is the case in Sellars’ myth of the genius Jones. Wishing to account for the rationality of human behaviour “not only when their conduct is threaded on a string of overt verbal episodes ... but also when no detectable verbal output is present”, Jones postulates inner episodes, “built on the model of [already understood] speech episodes”, thoughts (Sellars 1995 §56). Soon after, he postulates “episodes which he calls impressions” (Sellars 1995 § 60). Impressions are modelled on “the idea of a domain of “inner replicas” which, when brought about in standard conditions, share the perceptible characteristic of their physical source” (Sellars 1995 § 61). These replicas aren’t what subjects perceive when they perceive *that p*, but are nonetheless ‘in’ subjects when they do so, the commonality between perceptual takings such as *seeing that p* and *it appearing to one that p* being explained in terms of them. Jones’s ideas are new to the members of his community, the Neo-Ryleans.⁵⁹ We can assume the Neo-Ryleans to be a post Fall community who, after being disabused of the belief that they had direct unmediated access to the world, never thought to ask *what*, if anything, they *did* have direct unmediated

⁵⁹ They are *Neo-Ryleans* because they have abandoned the strict behaviourism of their forebears, the Ryleans, by allowing theoretical discourse that resists behaviouristic reduction (more on this below). The Ryleans, in turn, are *Ryleans* on account of their strict adherence to the philosophical behaviorism espoused by Gilbert Ryle (1949).

access to. Jones's suggestion might be what prompts them to finally take cognizance of their immediate conscious experience, thereby realising that they have been directly acquainted with the sense impressions he speaks of all along.

It is nonetheless noteworthy that this robust realist gloss on Sellars' myth relies on Neo-Ryleans being prompted towards a *realisation* by Jones's theoretical musings, as opposed to merely taking his psychological theory on board *qua* psychological theory. While it is of no particular consequence for the robust realists *when*, in the scheme of things, the concept of qualia is acquired, they are very much committed to a particular view of what it is to acquire it. Lewis (1999 p. 326) writes:

... despite the lack of a folksy word or phrase, I still say that the concept of qualia is somehow built into folk psychology. My reason is that when philosophers tell us very concisely indeed what they mean by 'qualia', we catch on. I think they never say enough to introduce the concept from scratch to someone who doesn't already have it (whether or not he has the qualia themselves). But maybe they do say enough to serve as a reminder to someone who has the concept already, even if he has it in some inexplicit way.

In contrast, a robust realist will maintain that if one actually does 'catch on' with respect to qualia talk, one becomes explicitly *cognitively* aware for the first time, not of an implicit theoretical commitment, but of phenomenology itself. Robust realists will likely cite the very considerations that lead Lewis to believe that qualia tacitly belong to our folk theory of mind as considerations in favour of their own view. Enough is never said to introduce the concept of qualia from scratch because nothing ever *could* be said that would suffice to do so. No amount of mere *description* of phenomenal colour properties will allow Mary, from the confines of her black and white room, to make the transition from an opaque role-theoretic conception of such properties to a topic-specific conception of their intrinsic phenomenal natures. It's hard to imagine how else one might gain topic-specific knowledge of an intrinsic nature other than by way of some kind of immediate contact with the nature at issue, or,

perhaps, with natures similar enough to make some kind of imaginative extrapolation, as would be the case if one managed to imagine the colour that would occupy a blank space in an otherwise continuous spectrum of shades of blue without ever having encountered that shade of blue before.⁶⁰ This makes for a somewhat queer connection between the acquisition of the concept of qualia and the reflection seemingly prompting such acquisition, as no mere ‘line of thought’ can ever, by itself, yield the concept of qualia. While for the conservative Neo-Rylean who is merely impressed by the explanatory power of Jones’s theory *qua* theory, Jones is merely a masterful theoretician, for the Neo-Ryleans who take themselves to be made cognitively aware, for the first time, of what they have been in immediate contact with all along, he is more akin to a Zen master. It is a central theme within Zen philosophy that the words and concepts deployed in canonical Zen texts and such are but means for moving beyond those very words and concepts. Such conceptually inflected material, it is said, is but a “finger pointing to the moon”. Shigenori Nagatomo (2010) writes, “Zen insists that there should not be a confounding of the moon with a finger. In Zen language, the moon metaphorically designates an experience of enlightenment and the finger a linguistic or reflective endeavour”. In Zen master Jones’s case, the moon is experience in general and the finger is his theory of thoughts and sense impressions.

4.1 The Schism

Let us imagine that a schism thus emerges among Jones’s Neo-Rylean acolytes. More conservative Neo-Ryleans maintain that Jones has done something impressive, but perfectly continuous with the enterprise of theory building already established within their community. Neo-Ryleans have already intellectually progressed beyond their primitive Rylean forebears

⁶⁰ Though once again we run into the issue of whether any *real* representational relation pertains between such an imagining and the actual, and presumably *different*, phenomenal property it is experienced as if to be an imagining of.

inasmuch as their language has been ‘enriched’ by the “addition of theoretical discourse”.

Sellars (1995 § 51) writes,

... the fundamental assumptions of a theory are usually developed ... by attempting to find a model, i.e. to describe a domain of familiar objects behaving in familiar ways such that we can see how the phenomena to be explained would arise if they consisted of this sort of thing. The essential thing about a model is that it is accompanied, so to speak, by a commentary which qualifies or limits – but not precisely nor in all respects – the analogy between the familiar objects and the entities which are being introduced by the theory.

Conservative Neo-Ryleans will say Jones is doing exactly this and nothing more. Jones has put forward a theory intended to *explain* the aforementioned empirical phenomena (rational behaviour unaccompanied by overt verbal and the semantic commonality of locutions such as ‘seeing that p’ and ‘it appearing to one that p’). Business continues as usual. His theory stands and falls on the basis of its theoretical worth, and all the qualifications of the accompanying commentary Sellars speaks of are to be in aid of this objective. To add a qualification, for instance, to the effect that when such ‘inner episodes’ occur, the subject they occur ‘in’ bears an absolutely unmediated relation to certain property instances they instantiate, would be an act of sheer perversion from the conservative Neo-Rylean perspective, unless, of course, such a qualification can be shown to have some form of *explanatory* cash value. In contrast, advocates of the Zen interpretation will insist upon such an immediate relation with property instances, as that’s what Jones has brought them to a realisation of.

The standoff thus described is, of course, the very standoff we find in the contemporary philosophical literature on consciousness, but with the considerations upon which each side places a premium brought into stark relief. To the conservative Neo-Ryleans, who place a high premium upon theoretical virtues, the Zen Neo-Ryleans are flying in the face of good science. Conservatism is a theoretical virtue in and of itself, and in breaking with the

‘business as usual’ approach to theory building, they have given themselves over to a scientifically unscrupulous mysticism. Zen Neo-Ryleans will likely maintain that there’s nothing mystical about the immediate experience they speak of, and that to become aware of it is, at the same time, to be made aware of a heretofore unacknowledged, but nonetheless *essential*, aspect of the very theory building the conservative Neo-Ryleans cite against them. It is to be made aware of the source of *empirical revelation*. Conservative Neo-Ryleans will likely take this to be but a further delusion built upon the initial delusion, maintaining that conservative scientific methodology has yielded a perfectly serviceable, and much more explanatorily edifying, account of so-called empirical revelation, a *causally mediated* one, involving light being deflected from objects onto the eye and such. Zen Neo-Ryleans might remind conservative Neo-Ryleans of the Fall, and that the prevailing view of perception was originally one of unmediated contact. They might therefore suggest that if, when perceptual contact with physical objects was shown *not* to be immediate, theorists had thought to ask *what* they were in immediate contact with *instead*, they would have arrived at the very realisation Zen master Jones’s teachings, properly understood, invokes. Conservative Neo-Ryleans might in turn reply that to discover that physical objects *aren’t* immediately apprehended isn’t to *discover* that something else *is*. All that is left is for the Zen Neo-Ryleans to appeal to the truthmakers for their claims, the truthmakers their Zen-like realisation has made them aware of. Conservative Neo-Ryleans will in turn deny them their realisation, perhaps saying that old *world-views* die hard. ‘It’s time to let go of Eden’, they might say. They might then go on the attack with respect to the *theoretical indeterminacy* of the properties the Zen Neo-Ryleans speak of, demanding that they offer a *description* adequate to individuate them. The Zen Neo-Ryleans will in turn reply that no mere *description* is up to the task. They will maintain that the terms they use to depict these natures depict them not on the basis of their relations to other *terms* in a theory or language, but by

virtue of their being appropriately related to the instances of the natures *themselves*. The semantic finger is pointing at the extra-semantic moon. What such properties lack in *theoretical* determinacy, they more than make up for in *ontological* determinacy.

4.2 Tough Talk and Tipping Points

There is clearly no chance of further dialogical progress here, as neither party places enough of a premium on the considerations cited by the other. Conservative Neo-Ryleans reject the purported ‘evidence’ cited by Zen Neo-Ryleans out of hand. Zen Neo-Ryleans will only countenance the empirical considerations cited by the conservative Neo-Ryleans inasmuch as they are interpreted in a manner that already assumes the truth of their view, as considerations born of *experience* as they characterise it. Each tribe can amass as many arguments of their preferred kind as they like, filling journals and monographs with anti-conservative or anti-Zen diatribes. The combined body of work thus produced won’t constitute a *debate*, as both parties are wilfully talking at cross-purposes. The balance of consideration can only be tilted by *considerations*, and neither party believes the other to be citing considerations that genuinely constitute any kind of threat to the view they hold. Each party has its own way of *talking tough*, of declaring its position impervious to the considerations cited by the other. Zen-Neo-Ryleans have the *Cartesian conceit* that their certainty regarding immediate experience is more certain than any consideration born of what Husserl (1999 pp. 33-37) called the “natural attitude”, including the metaphysical realism it is premised upon. The so-called ‘evidence’ cited by conservative Neo-Ryleans is premised upon the assumption that we have perceptual access to a mind independent *real* world, an assumption open to doubt in the way that the existence of immediate experience isn’t. The conservative Neo-Ryleans, in turn, have the *theoretician’s conceit*. They will insist on a kind of radical ontological pragmatism whereby existence shouldn’t be predicated of anything, experience included, that doesn’t earn its explanatory keep.

That such tough talk is, for the best part at least, merely talk is evidenced by the fact that in the actual literature on phenomenal consciousness, few, if any, defend either of the two foregoing positions with the ruthlessness one would expect of someone one hundred percent committed to either side. Instead, J.L. Austin's (1962 p. 2) famous words ring true: "There's the bit where you say it and the bit where you take it back". Turning first to the Cartesian conceit, it is noteworthy that Descartes' hyperbolic doubt didn't last long. Having doubted away everything but his own thinking self, he all-too-quickly won the world back by relatively specious means. While few have been moved by his case for certainty regarding the world built upon prior certainty in the existence of a god that would not deceive him, it might nonetheless be suggested that his impact upon the history of philosophy would have been far slighter if he hadn't won it back at all. Would Chalmers (1996 p. 75) have had the same impact on the contemporary landscape if, rather than giving himself "the physical world for free", he only did so after having attended to various sceptical problems? In particular, would he have had the same impact if he had shown that his Cartesian commitments rendered the possibility of a transcendentally real empirical world problematic? I think it doubtful. Denying the reality of the whole of the world is a reliable path to philosophical obscurity.⁶¹ Even Berkeley afforded the world full-blooded existence, albeit in the mind of God.⁶² As was seen in the previous chapter's discussion of the various reasons invoked for the Dennettian Dissolution of phenomenal depth, some acquaintance-based realists have allowed considerations born of theory (premised upon the assumption of the natural attitude) to trump considerations born of direct acquaintance. Such a concession *would* tilt the balance of

⁶¹ Such denial doesn't *guarantee* philosophical obscurity. It's unclear, for instance, that Bradley affords the world full-blooded existence.

⁶² Foster (1982 pp. 28, 29) points out that "the perceptive role of God takes on a new significance" in the *Three Dialogues* that it didn't have in the *Principles*: "Berkeley claims not merely that God *may* perceive physical objects at times when we do not, but that he actually does". The mature Berkeley thus characterises the physical world as "a spatiotemporal arrangement of sensible qualities which exist as the object of divine perception" and "serve as a blueprint for divine volition" (Foster 1982 p. 111).

consideration in favour of the conservative-Neo-Rylean view, giving them their gotcha moment. Let us call such a possibility a dialogical *tipping point*.

Turning now to the theoretician's conceit, it seems that even those who talk the toughest have the bit where they say it and the bit where they take it back. For instance, the following passage from Dennett (1993b pp. 382, 383) ...

My claim, then, is not just that the various technical or theoretical concepts of qualia are vague or equivocal, but that the source concept, the 'pre-theoretical' notion of which the former are presumed to be refinements, is so thoroughly confused that, even if we undertook to salvage some 'lowest common denominator' from the theoreticians' proposals, any acceptable version would be so radically unlike the ill formed notions that are commonly appealed to that it would be tactically obtuse – not to say Pickwickian – to cling to the term. Far better, tactically, to declare that there simply are no qualia at all.

... is prefaced by the following disclaimer:

Everything real has properties, and since I do not deny the reality of conscious experience, I grant that conscious experience has properties. I grant moreover that each person's conscious states have the experiential content they do. That is to say, whenever someone experiences something as being one way rather than another, this is true in virtue of some property of something happening in them at the time.

But the latter could be taken to be a straightforward avowal of phenomenal realism.

Phenomenal properties, after all, are simply meant to *be* the properties of experience, and to comprise the experiential content he speaks of. Dennett (1993b p. 382) assures us that "these properties are so unlike the properties traditionally imputed to consciousness that it would be grossly misleading to call any of them the long-sought qualia". But phenomenal properties aren't just *imputed* to consciousness by seriously committed phenomenal realists. They are thought to be of the *essence* of consciousness. Dennett might as well be saying that the properties he imputes to the totality of our phenomenal properties aren't phenomenal

properties. This, of course, isn't what he means. For all his *eliminativist* bluster, he is behaving very much like a *reductivist*, proposing a naturalistically respectable ersatz for conscious experience, an "imperfect deserver of the name" (Lewis 1999 p. 325). This ersatz consciousness is bound to possess significantly different properties from the consciousness of the non-reductive realist. Every such proposed ersatz does - hence the non-reductive realist accusations that reductive realists are engaging in "bait-and-switch" tactics (Chalmers 2010 p. 6).

Even Dennett doesn't want to outrightly deny the existence of conscious experience. At the same time, he acknowledges, "the price you pay for the possibility of empirically confirming your assertions is the outside chance of being discredited" (Dennett 1993b p. 392). Dennett, of all people, is in no position to appeal to his own conscious experience in support of his postulation of conscious experience as he characterises it. Rather, like Jones's conservative Neo-Rylean acolytes, he must be impressed by its *explanatory* power. Some of the most infamous and tough-talking conservatives seem to be surprisingly won over by the theoretical worth of some kind of watered down notion of consciousness. Even Churchland (1985 p. 28) who is more than open to the prospect of outright *eliminativism* with respect to propositional attitudes, nonetheless takes a softer, *reductivist* stance towards qualia:

I suggest then, that those of us who prize the flux and content of our subjective phenomenological experience need not view the advance of materialistic neuroscience with fear and foreboding. Quite the contrary. The genuine arrival of a materialist kinematics and dynamics for psychological states and cognitive processes will constitute not a gloom in which our inner life is suppressed or eclipsed, but rather a dawning, in which its marvellous intricacies are finally revealed – most notably, if we apply ourselves, in direct self-conscious introspection.

But from a *conservative* perspective, the very same considerations he cites in favour of eliminativism with respect to propositional attitudes seem equally applicable in the case of

consciousness. Arguably, they are *more* applicable. Propositional attitudes bear a stronger conceptual connection to observable behaviour, and Churchland (1981 p. 68) will admit that their postulation enables “the average person ... to explain, and even predict, the behaviour of other persons with a facility and success that is remarkable”. Churchland (1981 p. 69) nonetheless maintains that such a postulation is only “credible to the degree that it is successful in this regard over competing hypotheses”. He’s more than open to the possibility of it being “too confused and too defective to win survival through intertheoretic reduction” with whatever ultimately proves the best kinematic theory of human organisms, that is, the most efficient theory with respect to predicting human behaviour.⁶³ There *are* theoretical postulates, explanatory load bearers, within contemporary cognitive science that would seem to have the requisite degree of isomorphism with the ‘folk psychological notion’ of conscious experience that would render them apt to constitute its *theoretical* reduction, to be good enough deservers of the name. An example would be the notion Chalmers (2010 p. 21) refers to as “awareness”, which he describes as a “process” involving “contents that are directly accessible and potentially reportable, at least in a language using system”.⁶⁴ But theories of cognitive architecture that postulate such operations over representational *contents* are more often than not defended by way of an appeal to the nature of *propositional attitudes*. Classical computationalism, for instance, is often subscribed to on the strength of the *language of thought hypothesis*, the plausibility of which derives, in part at least, from purported syntactic and semantic similarities between propositional attitudes and linguistic forms of representation (Fodor 1987 pp. 139, 148, 149). Obviously, for those whose theoretical

⁶³ It should be noted that what constitutes the best theory isn’t just a matter of predictive accuracy but also practical utility. The best theory will be the one which, in Dennett’s (1998 p. 119) words, involves the right “trade-off between ease of use and immunity from error”.

⁶⁴ The very fact that Chalmers takes *structural isomorphism* between phenomenal consciousness and awareness to be a guiding principle in the development of a non-reductive theory of consciousness lends weight to this claim. “Adequate *mimicry*” of the objects or properties of an antiquated theory in a new, superior, theory is all that’s required for *theoretical* reduction (Churchland 1985 p. 10).

reduction of consciousness is premised upon an account of cognitive architecture, which they in turn premise upon realism about propositional attitudes, their theoretical reduction of consciousness is only as credible as their realism about propositional attitudes.

The explanatory merit of experiences would appear to be asymmetrically dependent on the explanatory merit of the *representational theory of mind*. It's less than clear how, for instance, the *dynamical* conceptions of cognitive architecture, which supplants the "configurations of tokens of symbol types" with rule-governed evolutions of numerical states, might yield an adequate *reduction* of conscious experience (Van Gelder 1995 p. 369).

Instead, Tim Van Gelder (1995 p. 381) suggests that the dynamical approach might offer an explanation of how the "post-Cartesian agent manages to cope with the world without necessarily representing it". Yet Churchland (1981 p. 84) and Dennett (1998 p. 120), who are both open to the *possibility* of the ultimate demise of "propositional kinematics", though disagreeing with respect to its likelihood,⁶⁵ never straightforwardly flag their openness to the possibility of the ultimate demise of conscious experience. Churchland, as we have seen, seems *more* certain of the existence of conscious experience than he is of propositional attitudes. But why?

We have seemingly arrived at another dialogical tipping point. Anyone who professes to take theoretical worth as the sole criterion for ontological commitment is not in a position to attribute existence to conscious experience unless a deserving counterpart for it can be shown to feature in a worthy theory, the most likely candidate theories being the behavioural kinematics of particular organisms. Zen Neo-Ryleans get their gotcha moment if conservative Neo-Ryleans cling to Jones's postulates in the face of the advent of a better theory, one that

⁶⁵ Dennett (1998 p. 120) writes, "A truly general purpose, robust system of pattern-description more valuable than the intentional stance is not an impossibility, but anyone who wants to bet on it might care to talk to me about the odds they'll take".

better predicts human behaviour. It would appear, in such a case, that for all their tough talk, the conservative Neo-Ryleans' motivations for postulating conscious experiences weren't purely theoretical after all. Of course, given that such a theory may never be forthcoming, such a gotcha moment might never be had. Computationalism continues, after all, to be a widely held view within cognitive science. The foregoing discussion nonetheless shows reluctance on the part of some of the more tough talking philosophers to straightforwardly embrace this consequence of their view.

In any case, members of the Zen camp needn't await the potential demise of Jonesean representationalism to get their gotcha moment. They need not catch conservatives out clinging to the existence of *consciousness* in the face of a lack of any purely theoretical motivation. It would suffice to catch them clinging to a particular *property* of consciousness. There's arguably a gotcha moment already to be had here. What benefit could there possibly be in postulating an *explanatory gap* between phenomenal concepts and physical concepts if phenomenal concepts are merely *theoretical* concepts postulated to *explain* physical behaviour?⁶⁶ It would be incredibly strange if the best explanation of an organism's physical kinematics essentially relied upon the postulation of properties which, while physical, were somehow resistant to physical explanation. Reductivists regarding phenomenal properties who nonetheless concede that there is an explanatory gap between our concepts of such properties and our physical concepts are wont to maintain that the gap itself can be explained by appeal to the special kind of epistemic relationship we bear to our phenomenal states (Chalmers 2010 p. 311). But such talk about a special epistemic relationship seems suspiciously like Zen talk. Lewis (1999 p. 327) takes the thesis that "we *identify* the qualia of our experience", such that we "know exactly what they are ... in an uncommonly demanding

⁶⁶ For the canonical defence of the explanatory gap view, see Levine (1983).

sense of ‘knowing what’”, to be the key aspect of the supposed folk theory that the materialist must abandon: “If qualia are physical properties of experiences, and experiences in turn are physical events, then it is certain that we seldom, if ever, identify the qualia of our experiences. Making discoveries in neuroscience is not so easy!” Given that impressions are postulated in Jonesian representationalism to explain the semantic commonality between appearance talk and straightforward perceptual reports, the archetypal conservative Neo-Rylean theorist, let’s call her Con, would likely think it reasonable to afford a degree of *reliability* to a reporter, let’s call him Rep, with respect to indicating the instantiation of his own sense impressions, but this need not involve special knowledge of *what* his reports reliably indicate. Con might also be sympathetic to the idea of a reliabilist epistemology, and therefore attribute *knowledge* of the instantiation of sense impressions to Rep. In such a case, she would have to concede that Rep’s knowledge of his own sense impressions comes by way of a different ‘mode of presentation’ to her knowledge of his sense impressions, but knowing things under a mode of presentation is not the same thing as knowing the mode of presentation under which one knows those things. Con need not think that the mode of presentation itself enters into Rep’s knowledge in some altogether special way, such that Rep has any special authority with respect to the nature of the mode of presentation or the impressions thus presented. Rather, she might think it a tenable working hypothesis that impressions are *neural* events given under a peculiarly *neurological* mode of presentation, and think *herself* better equipped, thanks to her special training in neuroscience, to determine exactly what kind of events they might be, and, in turn, what’s involved in the mode of presentation. Con need not take every aspect of the reports from Rep seriously. If she did, she’d be taking Zen talk of unmediated access to instances of intrinsic properties seriously. Rather, she will likely supplement her theory of what such reports accurately indicate with

various attributions of error, charitable reinterpretations and so on.⁶⁷ Her intention isn't to explain a form of incorrigible knowledge, but rather, the noteworthy affinity between certain publicly observable speech acts. She would likely take reported intuitions of an explanatory gap as indicative of thoroughgoing ignorance on the part of reporting subjects with respect to the nature of their own impressions. Affording subjects special epistemic authority on non-theoretical grounds would be tantamount to abandoning her conservative scruples and going Zen.

5. Calling Your Opponent's Bluff

It would appear that members from both sides of our standoff have unwittingly given the considerations cited by their opponents more credence than their tough talk would suggest that they were willing to. If it is in any way plausible that Zen talk of certainty regarding immediate experience trumping the natural attitude is mere posturing, or that conservative talk of theory building considerations trumping experiential considerations is mere posturing, a potential strategy opens up for opponents of each respective position. It is one thing to express a willingness to bite a bullet, another to actually do it. As it stands, neither faction really believes it must pay the metaphysical cost it proclaims to be willing to pay. If it could be demonstrated that those metaphysical costs actually were entailed by their view, they would be forced to show the depth of their convictions.

This strategy promises a road from the present standoff back to genuine debate, but it requires that one know one's enemy well enough to be capable of discerning the unpalatable

⁶⁷ Con's method will be recognised by those familiar with Dennett's work on consciousness as heterophenomenological in spirit. Rep is allowed the freedom to describe a "heterophenomenological world ... populated with all the images, events, sounds, smells, hunches, presentiments, and feelings ... [he] sincerely believes to exist in his ... stream of consciousness" (Dennett 1993a p. 98). But Con ultimately decides on conservative third-personal theoretical grounds which items in Rep's heterophenomenology, given a degree of "metaphorical slack", might be said to exist, and which, in contrast, are mere "confabulations" (Dennett 1993a pp. 94, 98).

metaphysical costs *internal* to their view. Genuine dialogical progress requires that each party abandon arguments premised upon principles only they accept in favour of arguments premised upon principles those in the opposing camp might accept. To explore the implications of Cartesian realism regarding consciousness is likely to strike those of a conservative persuasion, at first blush, as an act of sheer perversion, but the Zen view, premised, as it is, upon the Cartesian conceit, is impervious to the standard empirical considerations conservatives raise against it. What's more, such an exploration is already an implicit part of the conservative research program. Researchers like Con need only consider the implications of the less empirically plausible aspects of data provided by subjects like Rep, what would be the case if their testimonials regarding their experiences *were* true. Exploring the kinds of deflationist accounts of cognitive architecture conservatives are wont to defend might likewise strike some Zen adherents as an exercise in futility, but conservatives will be as blithely dismissive of their ten thousandth appeal to unmediated access to truthmakers as they were of their first. Also, inasmuch as many Zen adherents seek an understanding of the metaphysical connection between conscious and physical states, and generally think the kind of brain states conservatives are likely to identify with conscious experience are somehow involved in this connection, such exploration is likewise an implicit part of their research. Obviously, one can only successfully demonstrate that a view entails some metaphysical cost if the view does in fact entail such a cost. It is by no means obvious that either of the two views under discussion entail the metaphysical cost they claim a willingness to incur, but the tendency for members of each side to traverse the previously discussed tipping points suggests a lack of appreciation of the nature of the standoff they find themselves in, and, consequently, what they themselves are committing to in taking the position they take. Also, with respect to each faction, there is at least *some* reason for

thinking their view might incur a heavier metaphysical cost than they have heretofore acknowledged.

The major problem for the robust realism with respect to experience endorsed by those in the Zen camp is how it might be brought into harmony with the realistic picture of the world born of the natural attitude. Attempting to answer the question of how this might be done is perhaps the most active research project within the Zen camp, and every canonical solution has its canonical problems, for traditional interactionist dualism, the causal closure of the physical, for epiphenomenalist dualism, the very idea of epiphenomenalism, for Russellian views, the combination problem.⁶⁸ There is nonetheless an overriding conviction that the problem of integrating consciousness into a metaphysically realistic picture of the world is a problem with a solution. But we have already seen that there is a tendency among those in the Zen camp to afford considerations born of the natural attitude more weight than their stated position actually allows. Might their insistence upon the metaphysical marriage of non-reductive phenomenal realism and non-skeptical realism with respect to the world reflect a tacit unwillingness to pay the price that they claim to be willing to pay for their metaphysical commitments? An ambitious and committed conservative would do well to search for as many obstacles to the metaphysical integration of experiences (taken in the robustly realist Zen sense) and the world as possible, in hope that a watertight case *against* such a possibility might be made out.

There is also at least *some* reason to think conservatives might need to pay the kind of heavy price with respect to consciousness that the theoreticians conceit would have that they are willing to pay, though it must be admitted that it is somewhat more of a long shot. It is true that non-representational accounts of cognitive architecture have gained some degree of

⁶⁸ See Lewis (1999 pp. 282-285) for a succinct statement of the argument from causal closure and an unargued rejection of epiphenomenalism (albeit an attenuated form that survives the postulation of a Humean parapsychology). For more on the combination problem, see Chalmers (forthcoming b).

traction, but there is little prospect of such account becoming so well developed as to supplant even folk psychology, let alone representationalism in general, as the preferred kinematical explanation of human and animal behavior. And even if an ambitious Zen disciple did manage to show conservatives that there were simply no plausible *theoretical* grounds for postulation of a theoretical entity or property complex sufficiently isomorphic to the folk notion of conscious experience to deserve to be called such, victory would come with a sting in its tail. The desire for there to be some such physical complex is also shared by most members of the Zen camp. Without it, they lose any strong metaphysical intersection point between consciousness, as they characterize it, and physical reality.⁶⁹ In severing such a connection, they bring themselves much closer to a situation where they might have to make good on their own tough talk.

It would appear that inasmuch as the foregoing strategy offers a way beyond the present impasse, it places conservatives at an advantage. The possibility of Zen adherents having to make good on their tough talk seems far more likely, as much of the writing is already on the wall, and in calling members of the Zen camp out on their tough talk, conservatives incur no cost themselves. In any case, I will only be concerning myself with the conservative version of the foregoing strategy in this thesis. Over the following two chapters, I will attempt to demonstrate that Robust Realism, the strong form of phenomenal realism endorsed by those of the Zen faction, rules out the possibility of experiences existing spatiotemporally ‘within’ a transcendentally real physical world, or causally interacting with one from without.

Spatiotemporal inclusion and causal interaction are the two primary means by which robust realists have attempted to forge metaphysical connections between experience, as they characterize it, and the physical world. Without them, it would seem that the most intimate

⁶⁹ Chalmers (1996 pp. 222, 223), for instance, subscribes to what he calls “the principle of structural coherence”, according to which “various *structural* features of consciousness correspond directly to structural features that are represented in awareness”.

fundamental metaphysical relationship that might pertain between them is mere *coexistence*, albeit in complete isolation from each other.⁷⁰ In such a case, it's difficult to see what justification experience, the robust realist's sole source of empirical revelation, could possibly provide for the existence of such a world. It would be incumbent upon robust realists who continue to subscribe to transcendental realism regarding the physical world to explain why they do so without any reason whatsoever, why they don't just bite the bullet the Cartesian conceit has it that they are willing to bite.⁷¹

6. Seeking Inconsistency

I think it plausible that a good number of robust realists would take genuine entailment of a radical disconnect between experience and the world as reason for reconsidering their Cartesian commitments. But there is always the possibility that some robust realists aren't just talking tough, that they sincerely subscribe to the view that if the loss of the real world is a cost of their acquaintance based phenomenal realism, it is a cost they are forced to incur. I see very few philosophers openly choosing this path, if only on account of the social cost. I also think that if the robust realist community comprised only a handful of world-denying eccentrics, conservatives would be far less likely to afford them the kind of baseline

⁷⁰ I will flag one other possible way in which such a connection might be forged, but it depends upon a peculiar blend of presentism and phenomenal constitutivism regarding the physical world. I imagine few robust realists would be keen to adopt such a view. If they did, robust realists would have something new to defend, and deflationists, something new to attack. Such a significant change in the overall dialectic might itself be said to constitute a degree of progress.

⁷¹ Admittedly, it's not clear to me that they are altogether without recourse. They might, for instance, present a case not unlike the one David Lewis (1986b pp. 3-5) presents for real possible worlds, in spite of their having no bearing on the actual world, and, therefore, on the empirical data available at the actual world. They might suggest that in spite of the fact that it has no bearing on the course of experience, the actual physical world is nonetheless an explanatorily edifying theoretical postulate. The fact that they don't give theory-building considerations absolute primacy doesn't mean that they don't think theoretical considerations should play a significant part in determining one's ontological commitments. They might maintain that a theory that postulates something with its structure, in conjunction with the postulation of special theoretical relations associating certain physical state types it instantiates with certain phenomenal state types, still serves as the best possible explanation of the course of experience, albeit a purely *structural*, as opposed to a *causal*, one. In such a case, once again, robust realists would have something new to defend, and deflationists, something new to attack. I won't dedicate any significant space to such a view in this thesis, as it currently has no proponents, and I think few would find it attractive.

credibility one affords a genuine philosophical opponent. But inasmuch as one has taken the time to explore the implications of Robust Realism in the first place, one might hold some hope of uncovering something even more damning than an incompatibility with realism regarding the world. They might hope to uncover implications of the view that undermine the fundamental tenets of the view itself. If Robust Realism were self refuting in this way, subscription to it wouldn't merely be eccentric, it would be straightforwardly irrational. In the final chapter of this thesis, which is primarily concerned with the relation between phenomenal states and representational states, I give reason for thinking that experiences, as Robust Realists characterise them, cannot feed into a transcendently real account of concept formation and representation in the way they must do if they are to serve as transcendental truthmakers for phenomenal judgements. Robust realism, it will be remembered, is premised upon an acquaintance-based model of justification regarding phenomenal judgements, according to which experiences provide direct non-inferential justification for such judgements on account of their being what makes them true. It would be something of an indictment of the view if this proved impossible by its own lights.

7. Conclusion

So long as deflationists and non-deflationists continue to base the case for their respective positions upon their own norms of ontological commitment, the qualia debate is likely to remain in a state of perpetual stalemate. There is reason to think neither party are as committed to the norms characteristic of their view as their tough talk might have one believe. It is strategically prudential, therefore, to uncover whatever costs might be entailed by strict adherence to the norms of one's opponent. There are already *prima facie* reasons for thinking Robust Realism might face substantial costs. Deflationists would therefore do well to examine the implications of its fundamental tenets.

Chapter 3

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that robust realists are committed to a thesis regarding the constitutive nature of experiences I call the Constitution Thesis, according to which the constitutive nature of experiences is exhausted by their experienced nature.

I begin with a discussion of the comparative reliability of the dual desiderata governing the project undertaken in this thesis, those of phenomenological adequacy and coherence with the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism. In section 2, I acknowledge that while phenomenological adequacy is, according to Robust Realism, the primary constraint on theory-choice, the truth of Robust Realism doesn't entail that our phenomenal judgments are infallible. Indeed, I argue that we are prone to systematic error. In section 3, I flag that there are significant results to be obtained by the consideration of the *conceptual entailments* of Robust Realism. Such a method, relying, as it does, upon a shared understanding of relatively familiar concepts, is both more reliable and less controversial than that of appealing to the character of phenomenology.

In section 4, I introduce the Constitution Thesis, differentiating it from the somewhat similar claim that has already been established as a fundamental commitment of Robust Realism, the claim that experiences are exactly as they are experienced to be. Most robust realists, while endorsing this latter claim, reject the Constitution Thesis, holding that experiences possess constitutive natures that outstrip their experienced natures. The only potential constituents that have been decisively ruled out at this point are physical constituents.

In section 5, I discuss the tendency among robust realists who afford experiences a constitutive nature that outstrips their experienced nature to appeal to our general ignorance

regarding the potential constituents they cite. This might seem at odds with the explanatory goals of metaphysics, but Robust Realism already entails the rejection of any strong conceptual connection between existence and explanatory worth.

But in some case of some constituents, our understanding of them does seem sufficient to indicate that they cannot play the required theoretical role. In section 6, I argue that this is the case with respect to Chalmers' protophenomenal properties, as the constitution of one non-structural substantial substrate by another seems impossible, as does the composite constitution of a non-composite simple. But several other potential constituents remain. What's more, such a case against protophenomena is premised upon a phenomenological appeal to a somewhat nebulous aspect of certain phenomenal properties, their 'positive simplicity'. An argument for the Constitution Thesis premised upon the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism promises to prove more by less contentious means.

In section 7, I introduce the Revelation Argument,⁷² an argument for the Constitution Thesis in the literature. The Revelation Argument purports to derive the Constitution Thesis from the experiential revelation of phenomenal natures. I then consider Chalmers' recent attempted rebuttal of this argument. I explore an ambiguity in the Revelation Argument, and in sections 7.1 and 7.2 present reasons for thinking this vitiates Chalmers' case.

2. The Perils of Descriptive Phenomenology

Robust Realism is a form of realism regarding phenomenal properties premised upon the purportedly immediate experiential givenness of phenomenal property instances, one which refuses to countenance any explaining away of given instances by way of appeal to mistaken judgements, beliefs and such. Put simply, it is the view that there *are* phenomenal properties,

⁷² I take the name from Chalmers (forthcoming b pp. 12).

we know this because we *experience* them, and they *are* as they are *experienced* to be. So any exploration of the metaphysical implications of Robust Realism must take the desideratum of *fidelity to experience* very seriously. If experience exhibits properties of a given character, such properties *exist* and must be accounted for in metaphysical theory if it is to constitute a complete description of reality. We have already seen how this desideratum informs the metaphysics of more devout phenomenal realists in chapter 1. The rejection of any attempted reduction of phenomenal properties to physical properties by such realists was shown there to be premised upon the impossibility of certain *characteristics* of experience being adequately accounted for by physical properties. We considered the two opposing conceptions of the properties depicted in physical theory that have emerged in philosophical literature. One has it that such properties are topic-neutral properties realised by reality's intrinsic nature, with respect to which physical theory falls silent. The other has it that such properties don't characterise reality *opaquely* at all, that there's nothing to reality beyond the structure and dynamics depicted in physical theory. Devout phenomenal realists reject the former because experience, they say, affords an immediate topic-specific relation to properties which no amount of opaque topic-neutral description can adequately account for. They reject the latter because experience possesses structureless phenomenal properties that no amount of purely structural-cum-dynamical properties can yield, and a stand-alone existence which is at odds with the massive constitutive co-dependency that is characteristic of the view in question.

While fidelity to experience will serve as a key desideratum in the ensuing metaphysical explorations, it must be acknowledged that Robust Realism has it that experiences are exactly as they are *experienced* to be, not exactly as we would be sincerely inclined to *describe* them as being. Sincere phenomenological reports *can* be wrong.⁷³ Of course, such phenomenal

⁷³ Contemporary non-reductive realists typically eschew strong infallibility with respect to phenomenal judgements. Siewert (1998 pp. 14-19), for instance, makes it clear that while he thinks there is a distinctive kind

realists must think they're getting *some* things right on this score. Were they to have absolutely no idea what intrinsic properties their experiences instantiated, their rejection of the topic-neutral conception of experience as a 'something, we know not what' would seem rather spurious. But we have already encountered aspects of phenomenology that can serve as obstacles to phenomenological description. A relatively straightforward example would be its manifold *complexity*. Experience admits of more detail than we're capable of cognitively accounting for. A more complicated host of problems are born of the fact that the natural attitude, if nothing else, is *natural*, our epistemological default setting. Experience, as we have seen, doesn't immediately betray itself *as* experience. Phenomenally constituted appearances appear *as* non-phenomenally constituted objective phenomena. Even in the aftermath of the emergence of the concept of consciousness, there is a natural tendency to conflate the phenomenal and the objective.

A particularly common error is that of taking phenomenal aspects of phenomenology for non-phenomenal objective aspects of phenomenology, the mistaking of the appearance of *x* for the *x* of appearance. The most commonly cited instance of this kind of inversion, owing originally to William James (2008 p. 643) but often associated with Husserl, is the purported confusion of the phenomenal appearance of temporal succession with an objective temporal succession of phenomenal appearances.⁷⁴ But I believe inversions of this kind to be far more ubiquitous in the philosophy of consciousness. I have already cited other instances of this kind of inversion, the conflation of the intentionality of appearances with the appearance of intentionality and the conflation of attention phenomenology with extra-phenomenal attention

of first person warrant accruing to phenomenal judgements, he "neither asserts nor denies" their necessary infallibility. Chalmers (2010 pp. 277, 281) defends a highly attenuated infallibility thesis with respect to what he calls 'direct phenomenal beliefs', but is sure to make clear that "although direct phenomenal beliefs are infallible, subjects are not infallible about whether they are having a direct phenomenal belief".

⁷⁴ Christopher Hoerl (2013 p. 373) writes, "Often when a slogan of this type is used, Kant is a key influence. But it is actually quite difficult to find a clear-cut example in Kant's own writing. The closest he comes is probably in the note to the preface of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he writes that 'the representation of something permanent in existence is not the same as permanent representation'".

to phenomenology.⁷⁵ We will see in the next chapter that the same kind of inversion has occasionally been made with respect to spatiality (the conflating of the phenomenal appearance of spatiality for the objective spatiality of phenomenal appearances). In fact, I believe the succession example is a *bad* example, as I believe experience, taken at face value, reveals nothing fitting the description of an appearance of temporal succession, at least not in any *direct* non-phenomeno-notional sense. Instead, I think the philosophers who speak of such succession, many of whom write in the spirit of Robust Realism, have *inadvertently* allowed a certain conception of temporality, born of theory premised upon the natural attitude, to distort their characterisation of the kinds of temporal phenomena experience does in fact reveal. I will make my case for this view in the following chapter. What matters for now is that being thus misled is plausibly *another* way in which sincere attempts at phenomenal description can be undermined by our natural inclination towards the natural attitude. In any case, somebody, be it me or the Robust Realists that speak of phenomenal succession, is surely wrong, and it is just this possibility that I wish to bring into relief. Sincere attempts at phenomenological description can get things completely wrong. Were this not *prima facie* plausible, phenomenology would never have emerged as a specialised field. Nonetheless, so long as one is exploring the metaphysical implications of Robust Realism, the possibility of error cannot constitute sufficient reason for shying away from appeals to what one takes to be characteristics of consciousness. Robust Realism, after all, is realism about phenomenal property instances defended by way of a direct appeal to such instances. To have a propensity to get things wrong is not the same as being radically mistaken in every respect. That we are thus mistaken is Dennett's thesis. I have already appealed to putative aspects of phenomenology, phenomenal depth, empirical-world-giving and cognitive-

⁷⁵ I also cited another in a footnote, the conflation of the appearance of law-like-ness with the law-like-ness of appearance.

phenomenological characteristics, in distinguishing Robust Realism from weaker forms of phenomenal realism that play into Dennett's hands. I will make further appeals at various stages in the ensuing exploration. Most characteristics of consciousness I appeal to are relatively canonical, aspects of consciousness endorsed by a significant number of philosophers writing in the spirit of Robust Realism, the intrinsicity of phenomenal properties, the phenomenal unity of consciousness and such. I will nonetheless, on occasions, depart from majority opinion on the grounds that I think it has gotten the phenomenology wrong. Obviously, in all such instances, my case for whatever metaphysical implications I defend by way of such appeals will only ever be as good as my phenomenological descriptions are accurate.

3. Conceptual Analysis: A Less Perilous Path

But many of my arguments for particular metaphysical implications of Robust Realism will make no appeals to particular characteristics of consciousness at all. Instead, they will be arguments to the effect that certain metaphysical conclusions are *conceptually* entailed by those commitments already taken to be *definitive* of Robust Realism. In fact, I'll have arrived at some metaphysical results of some significance before I make any direct appeals to particular aspects of consciousness. I shall argue, without any such appeal, for instance, that Robust Realism rules out the possibility of experiences taking up position in space or time, so long as spatial dimensions and temporal duration are characterised, as they most often are, as metaphysically primitive non-phenomenal properties. Such results hinge upon appeals to *a priori* entailment relations between *concepts* such as those of reality, existence and constitution. For metaphysically informative results to be generated by mere conceptual analysis might strike the reader as an unlikely enough prospect to engender a degree of distrust, but the results will only be informative for Robust Realists insofar as they have failed to attend to the logic of their core commitments in the first place. It turns out that

Robust Realism places significant *logical* constraints on the metaphysics of consciousness before the apparent nature of phenomenology constrains it even further. Our agreed upon understanding of familiar concepts plausibly makes for a less perilous, and, less *controversial*, argumentative platform than that of direct phenomenological description, so it would be advantageous to derive as many informative metaphysical results by such means as possible.

There is nonetheless a risk of overstating the degree to which we are sidestepping appeals to phenomenology by arriving at results in such a way. The fundamental tenets of Robust Realism, it will be remembered, are themselves premised upon an appeal to phenomenology. Robust Realism, once again, is realism about phenomenal properties that cites unmediated access to instances of such properties, rather than conceptually inflected reasons, as its justificatory grounds. What's more, it is a claim to the effect that we do in fact have unmediated access to phenomenal property instances, a claim premised entirely upon a direct phenomenological appeal to the property instances themselves, that will ultimately prove, upon analysis, to yield significant metaphysical results. What matters, for our purposes, is that we are already bound to the claim in question so long as we are exploring the metaphysical implications of Robust Realism, and although its justification supposedly resides in the fact of the instantiation of *particular* phenomenal properties, the claim itself will be somewhat *general*, admitting of no specific details regarding the particular kinds of properties that are in fact instanced. Metaphysical results deriving from analysis of the claim alone will therefore be immune from errors concerning the specific kinds of properties found in experience. They will only be wrong if Robust Realism, in broad outline, is wrong.

4. The Constitution Thesis

The metaphysically significant results cited previously hinge upon the prior establishment of a thesis regarding the *constitutive nature* of experience, which will ultimately be established as a consequence of Robust Realism without appealing to any particular characteristics of consciousness:

The Constitution Thesis – The constitutive nature of any phenomenal property instance is exhausted by its phenomenal nature *qua* instance of said property, and, *qua* its experienced manner of instancing.

It is the business of this chapter to establish that the Constitution Thesis is entailed by the core commitments of Robust Realism.⁷⁶ The above formulation is a little awkward, on account of the two qualifications, each prefaced with the term ‘*qua*’, that have been added so as to decisively rule out certain peculiar accounts of the constitution of phenomenal property instances which do in fact appear in the literature and which might otherwise be thought to be in keeping with the thesis. The ‘*qua* instance of said property’ qualification is added so as to disallow experiences or their properties having *phenomenal* constituents they don’t themselves comprise the experiencing of. Some philosophers, Galen Strawson (2006b p. 261) for instance, reject the possibility of anything experiential being constituted by something altogether non-experiential, but allow that “experiential realities may be said to ... function as non-experiential but experience-constituting realities for other experiential realities”. The Constitution Thesis rules against this possibility just as decisively as it does the possibility of experiences having non-phenomenal constituents. The ‘*qua* its experienced manner of instancing’ qualification is invoked to disallow any constitutive account of consciousness that

⁷⁶ Though to avoid confusion, I should mention that some intermediate arguments that *do* involve direct phenomenological appeals will be considered along the way.

appeals, say, to phenomenal properties *qua* abstract universals, or to the phenomenal property *instances* existing in some capacity other than that in which experience finds them. Gregg Rosenberg's (2004 pp. 165, 168, 246) account of the 'becoming' of phenomenal states, if I understand it correctly, has it that complexes of phenomenal properties which manifest in experience as constitutively interdependent and inseparable, like phenomenal shape and colour properties, are in fact the constitutive product of the bonding of pure 'context independent' instances of such properties located, not in actuality, but in an abstract realm of possibility. The Constitution Thesis, as formulated above, rules out such an account.

The Constitution Thesis isn't entirely without precedent. Philosophy was first bequeathed a phenomenally constitutive conception of consciousness by Descartes. Strawson (2006b p. 204) writes, "His root – radical – idea about the nature of the subject of experience or soul is that it is somehow wholly and literally *constituted* of experience". Identification of the being and appearing of experiences went on to become a definitive feature of classical empiricism. Hume (1969 pp. 240, 241) claimed that, "all actions and sensations of the mind ... must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear". But historical precedence alone doesn't suffice for justification. Arguments for the Constitution Thesis are relatively thin on the ground. Some, like Strawson (2006a p. 21), are happy to let their rejection of certain possibilities that are at odds with the Constitution Thesis, in his case, the constitution of phenomenal properties by non-phenomenal properties, rest upon "unargued intuition", while allowing other possibilities that are equally at odds with it, like the constitution of experiences by other altogether different experiences.

One might be under the impression that a conceptual connection between Robust Realism and the Constitution Thesis has already been established, as Robust Realism has already been characterized as the view that experiences are exactly as they are experienced to be. This is not the case. To say that experiences are exactly as they are experienced to be is *not* to say

that they are *only* as they are experienced to be, that their phenomenal nature exhausts their constitutive nature. It remains open for a robust realist to maintain that experiences are possessive of the very phenomenal nature they are experienced to possess, but that their constitutive nature isn't exhausted by it. David Chalmers, for one, thinks the possibility of phenomenal properties being *constituted* by non-phenomenal "protophenomenal" properties "cannot be ruled out a priori" (Chalmers 1996 pp. 154, 298). The only account of the constitutive nature of experience that has been ruled out at this early stage is one according to which it is *wholly* constituted by *physical* properties. Whether or not Robust Realism is ultimately compatible with consciousness being *more* than it appears to be, it definitely has it that consciousness is *at least* as it appears to be, and its *topic-specificity* and *intrinsicity* jointly serve to rule out both conceptions of physical properties that have currency in the literature. All other prospective constitutive accounts of experience remain on the table until reason is found for dismissing them, or for favouring some particular account.

There are several such prospective accounts to be found in the literature. Some, as we have seen, think experiences can be constituted by altogether different experiences, others that they can be constituted by different ontological modes of the properties they instantiate, by the very same phenomenal properties *qua* universals or the very same property instances *qua* 'pure' context independent possibilia. Others, like Chalmers, postulate non-phenomenal intrinsic natures capable of constitutively yielding phenomenal intrinsic natures. Another possibility is constitution by altogether different *mental* properties. Robust Realism rejects Dennettian Dissolution, the explaining *away* of phenomenal properties by way of appeal to mistaken judgements, but we are yet to rule out an intellectualist account of the *constitution* of phenomenal properties. In defence of the view, held by some idealists, to the effect that all mentality consists solely in judgement, Ayer (1959 p. 100) writes, "It is open to the idealists to [maintain] that the making of a judgement is a necessary part of what constitutes the

object's being given".⁷⁷ Of course, this won't work if one endorses a physically constitutive account of judgement, as physical properties simply cannot constitutively yield phenomenal properties as Robust Realism characterises them. But at this stage, it remains open for those that endorse a non-physical constitutive account of judgement to endorse an intellectually constitutive account of experience.

5. Appeals to Ignorance

The how and why of such a constitutive account remains altogether mysterious, but such mysteriousness is quite often embraced by proponents of such accounts. After all, it is supposedly our positive understanding of the nature of physical properties and what they are capable of constituting which allows us, assuming Robust Realism, to positively rule out the physical constitution of phenomenal properties. In contrast, the properties cited in the foregoing constitutive accounts all rely upon a degree of ignorance regarding the constitutive capacities of their respective constituters. Who knows, for instance, what the ontologically *sui generis* judgements or spirit minds postulated by some idealists might be capable of constituting? Chalmers is quite clear on this score. Regarding his protophenomenal properties, non-phenomenal intrinsic realisers of physical properties which might potentially, at the same time, serve as the fundamental constituents of experiences, he writes:

One might object that we do not have any conception of what protophenomenal properties might be like or of how they could constitute phenomenal properties. This is true, but one could suggest that this [is] merely a product of our ignorance. In the case of familiar physical properties, there were principled reasons (based on the character of physical concepts) for denying a constitutive connection to phenomenal properties. Here, there are no such principled reasons. At most, there is ignorance of a connection. Of course, it would be very desirable to form a positive conception of protophenomenal properties. Perhaps we can do

⁷⁷ Ayer (1959 p. 101) does not himself subscribe to the view.

this indirectly by some sort of theoretical inference from the character of phenomenal properties to their underlying constituents, or perhaps knowledge of their nature will remain beyond us. Either way, this is no reason to reject the truth of the view (Chalmers 2010 pp. 135, 136).

It is for this reason that Chalmers (forthcoming a p. 15) can, in good conscience, reject arguments against protophenomenal constitution premised upon the same *epistemic* gap, which pertains between physical and phenomenal properties, likewise pertaining between protophenomenal and phenomenal properties. As he points out, the case against physicalism isn't premised upon an epistemic gap born of mere *ignorance*, but rather, upon "a more specific gap between the physical and the phenomenal" born of an *understanding* of the constitutive capacities of physical properties and the nature of experience (Chalmers forthcoming a p. 15). Contra Yujin Nagasawa (2002 p. 217), there is no reason to think that if Mary had *complete* protophenomenal knowledge from the confines of her black and white room, that she couldn't thereby deduce all the relevant phenomenal facts as well. Whether or not she *could* gain complete protophenomenal knowledge in such a situation is another question. Experience is the only unmediated form of contact with intrinsic natures that we possess, and it is the intrinsic topic-specific natures of protophenomenal properties that Mary must comprehend if she is to have a complete account of how consciousness, according to panprotopsyism, is constituted.⁷⁸ If Mary were capable of inferring the nature of the underlying constituents of her experiences from their phenomenal character, as Chalmers (2010 p. 136; forthcoming b p. 11) suggests *might* be possible, and if those very same constituents comprise the kinds of phenomenal colour properties that she would experience

⁷⁸ This point seems to be lost on Nagasawa (2002 p. 219), who claims that panprotopsyism "can merely provide structural and functional explanations of phenomenal properties in terms of their underlying protophenomenal properties" and takes this as a refutation of Chalmers' (1996 p. 107) claim that "explanation of consciousness is not just a matter of explaining structure and function". It is no such thing. A panprotopsyist explanation of consciousness is an explanation of consciousness in terms of the structuring (and functioning?) of a *specific* intrinsic nature.

upon escape, there's no reason to think she couldn't arrive at the concept of such properties from the confines of her black and white room. Whether or not Mary the protophenomenal expert is possible, we are most definitely nothing like her, but one doesn't need the kind of superhuman knowledge attributed to her to understand the problem besetting the view that experience is constituted by physical properties.

It might be objected that acquiescing in mystery is anathema to the *explanatory* goals of metaphysics. This might be true, but as we have already seen, Robust Realism is somewhat at odds with the view that existence should only be predicated of things that earn their explanatory keep. Phenomenal properties, as Robust Realism characterises them, are something of a metaphysical nuisance, having no clearly delineated role *qua* explanans. What's more, we shall see in the following chapter that to deny our experiences a 'hidden' constitutive nature beyond their experienced nature is to incur a significant metaphysical cost, namely, to lose all significant metaphysical connections by means of which experiences might be tethered to a transcendentally real world. Plausibly few robust realists, Cartesian 'tough talk' aside, would be willing to pay this price. It is therefore in the interests of such robust realists, who have already, after all, rejected any kind of conceptual entailment between existence and theoretical fecundity, to embrace a degree of mystery at the cost of explanatory edification.

6. Chalmers' Panprotopsyism: Problematic Intuitions

In spite of there being a degree of mystery surrounding the various constitutive accounts under consideration, enough is understood about some of the potential constituents cited to render the prospect of their constituting experience problematic. I would like to temporarily focus specifically upon Chalmers' panprotopsyism. With constitution by way of physical properties out of the picture, this is the constitutive account that is likely to appeal most to

contemporary sensibilities, inasmuch as it is the account that is most closely aligned to straightforward naturalism. Essentially, Chalmers thinks physical *stuff*, might be capable of constitutively yielding experiences, not solely by way of the structure and dynamics it realises, as depicted in physical theory, but by way of its nature *qua* the kind of stuff it is, its *intrinsic* nature (Chalmers 1996 pp. 153; forthcoming a p. 11). For naturalists already committed to there being physical stuff, in addition to physical *properties* as depicted in physical theory, to accept such a view doesn't constitute any change with respect to the basic furniture of the world. Unlike some, Strawson (2006a p. 21) for instance, Chalmers (1996 p. 154) doesn't think the intrinsic nature of physical reality must itself be phenomenal in order to yield phenomenal properties. One need not, therefore, endorse an intuitively unpalatable panpsychism, according to which phenomenality is present at 'ground floor' of physical reality. Panprotopsychism is a far less controversial view that has it that properties *capable* of constituting experiences are ubiquitous, present throughout the entirety of physical reality. All naturalists believe this.

Chalmers' case for panprotopsychism in *The Conscious Mind* proceeds by way of a detour. He first makes the case for panpsychism, noting that if reality admitted of nothing but the structure and dynamics articulated in physical theory, "it would contain only causal and nomic relations between empty placeholders with no properties of their own", and suggesting that it might be "more reasonable to suppose that the basic entities that all this causation relates have some internal nature of their own, some intrinsic properties, so that the world has some substance to it" (Chalmers 1996 p. 153). Physics falls silent about the intrinsic nature many believe to underlie the structure and dynamics it posits, and "there is only one class of intrinsic, nonrelational property with which we have any direct familiarity, and that is the class of phenomenal properties" (Chalmers 1996 p. 153). The idea that such properties might fill the void naturally suggests itself. But in such a case phenomenality would be absolutely

ubiquitous, an intuitively unpalatable consequence prompting him to step back from panpsychism, instead suggesting panprotopsyism (Chalmers 1996 p. 154).⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that Chalmers (1996 p. 153) suggests this possibility directly after having suggested that phenomenal properties might be the intrinsic properties ensuring “that the world has some substance to it”. No comments are made to the effect that while panpsychism kills two birds with one stone by providing physical reality with much needed substance, panprotopsyism kills three, by also providing phenomenology with much needed substance. Phenomenology already possesses an intrinsic nature *qua* phenomenology. If an intrinsic nature doesn’t suffice to afford experience a substantive constitutive nature, it might reasonably be asked why it should do so in the case of the physical world, why physical reality, replete with an intrinsic nature, shouldn’t stand in need of yet further constitution, and the relevant constituents in need of yet further constitution, and so on. Given Chalmers’ (2010 p. 472) penchant for ‘deep’ metaphysics, e.g. his openness to the idea that our world might be a giant computation implemented in the “next world up”, which presumably might also be a giant computation, it is not entirely clear he’d be bothered by such a regress. It might nonetheless be thought that the possibility of such a regress somewhat undermines the case for positing an intrinsic aspect to physical reality in the first place. We are working within a dialogical context, however, which eschews any kind of pragmatist entailment relation between existence and explanatory worth, so this doesn’t constitute any kind of decisive objection.

But there is plausibly a stronger objection that might be raised, premised, once again, upon the intuition that the intrinsic properties of physical reality might constitute its *substantial*

⁷⁹ The more recent ‘Hegelian’ case put forth in his ‘Panpsychism and Panprotopsyism’ likewise arrives at panprotopsyism by way of a dialectical movement which first yields panpsychism, with respect to which panprotopsyism constitutes a new ‘antithesis’.

nature. As we have seen, Chalmers himself avows such an intuition. Strawson (2006a p. 28) is even more forthright on this score: “One needs to grasp fully the point that ‘property dualism’, applied to intrinsic, non-relational properties, is strictly incoherent ... insofar as it purports to be genuinely distinct from substance dualism, because there is nothing more to a thing’s being than its intrinsic, non-relational propertiedness”. It is to be remembered that it is intrinsic properties of experiences which, in W.S. Robinson’s (1995 p. 153) words, have “no structural expression”, that disallow the reduction of experiences to physical properties. Such properties seem very much like the *stuff* bearing the less metaphysically problematic structural properties that experiences have *qua* experiences, the “geometry of the visual field” and such (Chalmers 1995 p. 398). Such structural properties, Chalmers (1995 p. 398) suggests, “may be reducible to structureless *phenomenal* properties and their relations”.

But much as we feel we have the kind of understanding of structural facts that allows us to rule out the possibility of any amount of *purely* structural facts ever entailing non-structural facts about substance, our intuitive understanding of substance is such that no substance, or collection thereof, can yield another altogether different substance. To be clear, by ‘substance’ I mean non-structural but structure bearing intrinsic properties. In everyday speech, all manner of macroscopic physical types are referred to as substances, and it is entirely uncontroversial that combinations of such substances can yield other such substances. Flour and water, for instance, can constitutively yield dough. But the yielding of a non-structural substratum by an altogether different substratum is not the same thing.

Intuitions to the effect that this is impossible plausibly account for the seeming incongruity between the Edenic world betrayed by the senses and the world as depicted by science.

Jackson (1977 p. 120) writes:

It is commonplace that there is an apparent clash between the picture Science gives of the world around us and the picture our senses give us. We sense the world as made up of

coloured, materially continuous, macroscopic, stable objects; Science and, in particular, Physics, tells us that the material world is constituted of clouds of minute, colourless, highly-mobile particles.

Intuitively, the Lockean solution of relegating the primitive colour qualities our Edenic forebears took to directly inhere in object surfaces to subjective experiences, where instead they directly inhere in object surface *appearances*, serves to somewhat resolve the tension between these two views. The mind body problem, however unpalatable, might nonetheless be thought preferable to the ‘microscopia macroscopia problem’ that would seemingly pertain if such Edenic properties were still thought to inhere directly in physical objects in the manner they appear to, as there is a strong intuition to the effect that no aggregating of things in which no such Edenic colour properties inhere could constitutively yield something in which they do (Chalmers 2010 p. 399). Intuitively, this could only be so if the colourless constituents magically *changed* in their intrinsic nature when attaining some level of structural complexity. If anyone who did not wish to allow for such a possibility nonetheless insisted upon microscopia which lack Edenic colour properties and macroscopia which possess them, it is difficult to see how they could be endorsing anything other than a kind of *dualism*, featuring the brute non-constitutive emergence of primitively coloured surfaces wherever certain structural properties are constitutively yielded by colourless microscopia.

The foregoing intuition mongering might strike some as a little fast and loose, but it can be tamed somewhat. There is plausibly a more basic intuition upon which it is premised, one very similar to that on account of which robust realists rule out physical properties as prospective constituents of experience. As we have seen, one of the principle reasons cited by robust realists for insisting that experiences can’t be constituted by physical properties alone is that experiences possess properties that no amount of purely *structural* description can ever

account for. Such properties appear, in the thetic phenomenal sense, to be *simples*,⁸⁰ and robust realists are committed to the view that if that's how they phenomenally seem, that's how they really are. But if such properties are constitutively yielded by the *structuring* of *other* intrinsic properties, or even by their mere *combination*, they aren't really simples at all. Is it not every bit as certain as the fact that structure can never yield non-structure that something non-composite can never be arrived at by way of composition? Any reply to the effect that such properties are only simples *qua* phenomenology arguably constitutes a stepping back from Robust Realism, as it reintroduces a distinction between how phenomenal properties phenomenally appear and how they really are, thereby giving the game to Dennett. Why, after all, can the same strategy not be invoked with respect to other aspects of experience, its immediacy, intrinsicality and such?

Do the foregoing considerations serve to vindicate the Constitution Thesis? Perhaps not. Firstly, such arguments are premised upon our intuitive understanding of constitution by way of intrinsic substrata. We might well have enough of an understanding of the notion of intrinsic substrata to rule out the constitutive yielding of one by another, but other forms of constitution remain on the table. In particular, it is open to robust realists to retreat even further into mystery. Ontologically *sui generis* minds, for instance, are a mysterious enough notion for all bets to be off regarding what they might be capable of constitutively yielding and the means by which they might do so. Without a solid understanding of the principles governing 'spiritual' constitution, we can't rule it out by the same means. Spiritual constitution might not involve any aggregation of distinct components or component properties. The idea seems far-fetched, but Chalmers (1996 p. 307) has at least flagged the possibility that phenomenology might have its own peculiar mode of constitution: "We tend

⁸⁰ This is the feature Levine (1983 p. 359) is appealing to in his argument for an explanatory gap between physical and phenomenal facts.

to think about this in terms of a physical analogy ... Perhaps phenomenology is constituted in a different way entirely". It's not *prima facie* obvious that there couldn't be modes of constitution distinct from physical mereology. As a matter of fact, a form of non-mereological constitution already has currency in contemporary literature; a popular form of contemporary realism about universals has it that universals are constituents of states of affairs, but not proper parts thereof (Armstrong 1989 pp. 91-93).

Of course, if we are to speak of altogether inscrutable modes of *constitution*, we had best at least have some conception of what makes the relation between something and its purported constituents a *constitutive* relation, as opposed to some other type of relation. I will return to this point shortly. But it would certainly appear that the war has not yet been won. It won't do, for instance, to argue from the fact that experiences *don't appear* to have mysterious hidden constituents, along with the Robust Realist tenet that experiences are as they appear to be, to the conclusion that experiences don't have such constituents. The sense in which experiences, according to Robust Realism, are exactly as they appear is restricted entirely to what we might call their *positive* phenomenological character. Robust realists need not, for instance, take the phenomenological fact that our experiences don't appear to coexist with anything else to constitute a vindication of an extreme form of solipsism. This point might even be thought to undercut the foregoing argument inasmuch as it is premised upon the idea that certain phenomenal properties don't appear to be structured. The argument might be defended by way of an appeal to the idea of experience betraying properties possessing a kind of positive simplicity, which, in turn, is *understood* to *entail* the negative property of lacking structure. This, after all, is surely how the move from the positive intrinsicity of experience to its *non*-structural-cum-dynamical constitution works.

In any case, the foregoing argument isn't the kind of argument I have promised to advance in favour of the Constitution Thesis inasmuch as it is premised upon an appeal to a particular

aspect of experience, the supposed simplicity of some of its properties. I have already pointed out that while such phenomenological appeals will form part of my argumentative platform throughout this thesis, they arguably constitute a weaker form of data than the kind of analysis of the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism upon which I promised to build my case for the Constitution Thesis. The issue is particularly pertinent in cases where the properties attributed to experience on the basis of such appeals are somewhat nebulous, as some might maintain to be the case with the kind of positive simplicity appealed to in the foregoing argument. Chalmers (1995 p. 398) himself has been willing to at least entertain the prospect that experiences might have “structure all the way down”, suggesting that in such a case, the irreducibility of phenomenal properties to physical properties might obtain nonetheless on account of the “kind of structure found in the physical domain, and ultimately in the intrinsicness of phenomenal properties, which contrasts with the relational nature of our physical concepts”. But intrinsicness is likely to strike those wary of the notion of positive simplicity as every bit as nebulous. Dennett (1988 p. 403) writes, “If even such a brilliant theory-monger as David Lewis can try and fail, by his own admission, to define the extrinsic/intrinsic distinction coherently, we can begin to wonder if the concept deserves our further attention after all”. I am not suggesting that such difficulties serve as adequate grounds for dismissing attributions of such properties on the basis of descriptive phenomenology. On the contrary, I think such attributions seem fitting.⁸¹ My point is merely

⁸¹ The robust realist also has argumentative recourse here inasmuch as positive simplicity and intrinsicness seem like exactly the kinds of properties that would resist analysis. For a property to be simple, or intrinsic *tout court*, as opposed to merely intrinsic *to* the objects that instantiate it, the *relational* property with which Lewis (1999 pp. 116-132) concerns himself, is plausibly for it to be the kind of property that resists explication in terms of anything else. The robust realist will likely maintain that far from being nebulous, their concepts of positive simplicity, non-relational intrinsicness and such, are perfectly straightforward but *inarticulable* on account of their being *conceptually* primitive, arrived at, not by any form of constructive conceptual activity, but rather, by way of the direct interfacing of the conceptual faculties with transcendently real, that is, conceptuality transcendent, instances of the relevant properties. Chalmers (2010 p. 267), for instance, speaks of a kind of formation of phenomenal concepts according to which one “forms [the] concept wholly based on attention to [a phenomenal] quality, “taking up” the quality into the concept”.

that an argument for the Constitution Thesis premised upon analysis of the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism promises to establish all the restrictions on the constitutive nature of consciousness that any of the foregoing arguments succeed in establishing, and more besides, with less controversy. If the constitutive nature of experiences is exhausted, as per the Constitution Thesis, by their experienced nature, if, that is, there is no part of their constitutive nature that isn't an instance of a mode of phenomenal appearing, they plausibly cannot be constituted by fundamental physical properties. Physical properties aren't modes of phenomenal appearing unless, which seems unlikely, the very concept of structure and dynamics somehow entails exhaustive constitutive phenomenality. Nor can they be constituted by Chalmers protophenomenal properties, as such properties are non-phenomenal by definition. Nor can they be constituted by non-experientially constituted spirits, judgements, abstracta etc, or by phenomenal properties themselves *qua* uninstantiated universals.

7. The Revelation Argument

My argument from the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism to the Constitution Thesis isn't entirely new. A somewhat sketchy and informal formulation of it can be found in Hume (1969 pp. 240, 241): "For since all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness, they must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear". In this passage, Hume appears to move directly from the fact that sensations are revealed in conscious experience to a claim about their constitutive nature that seems very much in keeping with the Constitution Thesis. What, if anything, might give him inferential license to do so? As we shall see, much hinges on how this question is answered.

Chalmers (forthcoming b pp. 12, 13) discusses an argument which occasionally appears in contemporary literature that makes such a move, a move, that is, from the experiential

revelation of phenomenal natures to the claim that their experienced nature exhausts their constitutive nature, an argument he calls the Revelation Argument. While he presents the Revelation Argument as an argument against the constitution of macro-experiences by micro-experiences, the argument is easily adapted into a more general argument against consciousness having ‘hidden’ constituents of any kind, physical properties, protophenomena, experiential constituents that aren’t experientially revealed, mysterious abstract or spiritual constituents etc. Let us call such properties *unrevealed* properties. Thus adapted, it runs as follows

(1) The nature of consciousness is revealed to us in introspection.

(2) Whatever constitutes consciousness is part of its nature.

(3) Unrevealed properties aren’t revealed to us in introspection.

(C) Unrevealed properties don’t constitute consciousness.

Is this argument sound? The answer to this question isn’t entirely clear-cut, as the argument, in its current formulation, admits of a degree of ambiguity. Much hangs on what the revealing of the nature of experience is thought to involve. It turns out that ‘reveal’, ‘revelation’ and such behave very much like the ‘appear’-words discussed in chapter 1. Premises (1) and (3) can be afforded an interpretation according to which the nature of consciousness is *phenomenally* revealed, that is, simply *instanced*, in experience, or a more intellectualist interpretation according to which the nature of consciousness is somehow cognized or understood. Furthermore, the meaning of the term ‘nature’ in premises (1) and (2) is beholden to the mode of revelation in play. Phenomenal revelation involves the actual *instancing* of the nature at issue, the revelation of the *existence* of the nature. Intellectual revelation, on the other hand, involves something like the comprehension of the nature, the revelation of the *concept* of the nature. Which interpretation does Chalmers intend? Chalmers appears to

equivocate on this score. While he speaks of ‘specific instances’ of phenomenal properties, his grounds for rejecting the argument, we shall see, are only plausible on an intellectualist reading (Chalmers forthcoming b p. 13). I will briefly discuss the intellectual interpretation and Chalmers’ rebuttal before moving on to the phenomenal interpretation, arguing that it does in fact vindicate the Constitution Thesis, so long as we are assuming Robust Realism.

7.1 The Intellectualist Interpretation

An intellectualist interpretation of premise (1) yields a much stronger claim than the phenomenal interpretation. The phenomenal interpretation merely has it that phenomenal natures are *instanced* in experience. That they are is a fundamental tenet of Robust Realism. Robust Realism, after all, is realism about such natures premised upon ones being immediately apprised of the *fact* of their existence, i.e. what makes claims to the effect that they exist *true* claims, i.e. their existence itself. In contrast, an intellectual interpretation demands a significant degree of *understanding* regarding such natures, one sufficiently robust to render one capable of decisively ruling out the possibility of unrevealed constituents. Goff (2006 p. 57), for instance, discusses an intellectualist version of the Revelation Argument premised upon our “having, through introspection, a transparent understanding of the essential nature of [our] conscious experience”. An argument premised upon our having such an understanding, be it sound or unsound, won’t deliver on the foregoing promise to establish the Constitution Thesis by way of an analysis of the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism, as Robust Realism does not demand that we have any such understanding. Robust Realism derives from a contemporary phenomenal realism eschewing the epistemic-role-essentialism of its predecessors. It is perfectly compatible with the instantiation of phenomenal properties in the absence of concepts, understanding and the like. It is likewise compatible with the understanding we do in fact have of the phenomenal properties instanced in our experience being something less than a thoroughgoing comprehension of their essence. It would seem

that our experiencing phenomenal properties doesn't immediately afford us such comprehension of their essential nature. Far from straightforwardly revealing their essence to the understanding, phenomenal property instances aren't even experienced *as* phenomenal property instances, nor our experiences *as* experiences. Experiential acquaintance with the instancing of a property that happens to have a particular logical profile is not the same as knowing what that logical profile is. The distinction can be seen in Strawson. Strawson (2006b p. 243) maintains that the properties instanced in experience are essentially dispositional in a strong non-Humean sense. If this is the case, they're not *intellectually* revealed in introspection. The case for Humeanism is plausibly built, in part at least, upon a failure to *recognise* the instancing of any such powers in empirical experience. Strawson isn't bothered by this. Robust Realism is premised upon an appeal to the actual categorical being of phenomenal properties, not their potential counterfactual being. All experiencing involves the actual categorical being of actual categorical properties. But Strawson (2006b pp. 195, 204) maintains that those self same categorical properties *are* dispositional properties, that their categorical nature is one and the same as their dispositional nature. The two, he claims, are merely *conceptually* distinct, not *really* distinct (Strawson 2006b pp. 195, 204). Strawson (2006b pp. 252, 261 emphasis mine) is quite candid about his willingness to abandon what he calls the "Full Revelation Thesis": "In the case of any particular experience, I am acquainted with the whole *essential* nature of the experience just in having it". In contrast, he is sure to be clear that he *does* subscribe to the robust realist tenet that experiences are exactly how they are experienced to be (Strawson 2006b p. 253).

The intellectualist interpretation of the Revelation Argument diverges from the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism at premise (1). But even if one were to buy the intellectual interpretation of that premise, the intellectualist interpretation of premise (2) – 'Whatever constitutes consciousness is part of its nature' – is open to a relatively straightforward

objection. It is to be remembered that on an intellectualist interpretation of this premise, we are concerned with the *concept* of the nature of consciousness. The revelation of premise (1) isn't the mere *instanting* of the nature of consciousness. It is the *understanding* of that nature, possession of an adequately rich *conception* of it. Premise (2), on an intellectualist reading, has it that the *particular* constituents of consciousness form part of the *concept* of the phenomenal nature it instantiates. Chalmers (forthcoming b p. 13) refutes premise (2) thusly:

One can distinguish the nature of a phenomenal property from the grounds (or realizers or constituters) of an instance of that property. It is a familiar point that a single property can be multiply realized by different grounds in different instances, and it is not clear why the same should not also apply to phenomenal properties. It is then coherent to hold that the nature of a phenomenal property is revealed by introspection although the grounds of a specific instance are not (Chalmers forthcoming p. 13).

This certainly seems like an adequate refutation of the intellectualist interpretation of premise (2). A great number of properties are such that their *concept* doesn't stipulate specific constituents, so it is incumbent upon the proponent of the intellectualist version of the Revelation Argument to supply further *reasons* for thinking this is not the case with regards to phenomenal properties.

7.2 The Phenomenal Interpretation

But Chalmers surely intends to do more than refute the intellectualist interpretation of the Revelation Argument. If this interpretation didn't appear somewhat perverse from the outset, it is almost certain to do so now. The claim that phenomenal properties are *instanced* in experience, although a somewhat weaker claim than the claim that every aspect of their essential nature is understood, is the all-important claim in this context. It's what makes Robust Realism Robust *Realism*. The nature of consciousness isn't revealed in introspection as something that may or may not be, as when Descartes (1988 p. 106) considers the nature

of a triangle prior to establishing that any such extended thing exists. It is revealed as *existent*, not by way of an understanding of its concept, as when Anselm moves from an understanding of God's essential nature to his existence, but rather, *directly* (Anselm & Gaunilo 1984 pp. 541, 542). Its existence itself is revealed.

Premise (2), on the phenomenal interpretation, has it that whatever constitutes the *instanting* of consciousness's phenomenal nature, which is said to be revealed in premise (1), is part of that very instance of consciousness's phenomenal nature. Robust realists cannot plausibly deny this. For any property instance with a constitutive nature, its instancing is one and the same as the instancing of that constitutive nature. Such is the nature of constitution.

Philosophy might sometimes speak of things without constituents, unstructured abstracta and such, but for things with a constitutive nature, their existence *is* the existence of their constitutive nature. If the existence of this nature isn't revealed in introspection, nor is the existence of the nature thus constituted.

In saying that it is of the very nature of constitution that the existence of something with a constitutive nature is one and the same as the existence of its constituents, I am taking the phenomenal reading of premise (2) to articulate a *conceptual* truth. In discussing possible responses to the arguments discussed prior to the Revelation Argument (those premised upon the impossibility of the constitution of non-structural substrates from other non-structural substrates or the non-simple constitution of phenomenal simples), I suggested that robust realists might evade the constitution thesis by retreating further into mystery, postulating altogether mysterious modes of constitution. At the same time, I suggested that those who speak of altogether inscrutable modes of *constitution* should have at least some conception of what makes the relation between a thing or property and its constituents a *constitutive*

relation, as opposed to some other type of relation. That the existence of something with a constitutive nature should not stand apart from the existence of its constituents seems like something that should pertain in any prospective case of constitution. Otherwise, what's to prevent the substance dualist from saying physical properties do in fact constitute mental substances, in spite of the existence of the latter being completely independent of the existence of the former? Such a position seems manifestly absurd. Note that the invocation of necessity won't help here. To say that a mental substance the existence of which is altogether separate from human physiology exists by necessity whenever a particular physical thing, say, a functioning human brain, exists is not to say that the brain constitutes the mental substance. The two merely necessarily coexist. For the existence of a thing or property to come apart from the existence of its constituents seems an affront to the very *logic* of constitution.

Chalmers refutation of premise (2) appeals to a duality between properties and their realisation that is applicable so long as one is considering properties *qua* concepts or uninstantiated universals. But there is no way of making it applicable in the case of property *instances* and their realisers, as a property instance *is* its constitutive realisation. It won't do, for instance, to differentiate between two different senses of the term 'existence', one "tied to the realisation of a property", the other "tied to the nature of the property", and insist the "[existence]"⁸² of consciousness in the second sense is revealed but not the [existence] of consciousness in the first sense" (Chalmers 2013, pers.comm., 9 May).⁸³ How could the

⁸² Chalmers used the term 'being', as opposed to 'existence' in his correspondence, as it was the term I used in the draft paper he was responding to. I don't believe my substituting the former with the latter significantly alters the sense of his claims in this context.

⁸³ Chalmers (2007 p. 28) has advanced an analysis of "ordinary existence claims" which does render the meaning of 'exists' context sensitive. According to Chalmers (2007 p. 30), the context of an utterance determines a "domain-determination function ... specifying a class of entities that are taken to exist in" the

existence of the nature of a property *qua* categorical instance of that nature possibly stand apart from realisation facts? The realisation facts, after all, are what make the instance of the nature real. In particular, the fact of the instancing of the nature *supervenes* on the fact of its *constitutive* realisation. If we wish to omit such realisation facts from the sphere of introspective revelation, we must step back from acquaintance-based realism about phenomenal property *instances* to a weaker, and significantly less plausible, acquaintance-based realism regarding phenomenal properties *qua* concepts or uninstantiated universals, as what is essentially omitted from introspective revelation is the fact of such properties actually being realised. We have seen that Chalmers (1996 p. 196) rejects reliabilistic accounts of justification of phenomenal judgements on the grounds that “they make our access to consciousness mediated”, saying “this sort of mediation is only appropriate when there is a gap between our core epistemic situation and the phenomena in question”, while “intuitively, our access to consciousness is not mediated at all”. But his postulation of protophenomenal properties opens up just such a gap, a gap between the experiential and constitutive natures of phenomenal property instances. At best, their experienced nature might *mediate* knowledge of their non-phenomenal constitutive existence. One only directly experiences *them* if their constitutive nature is directly experienced, and for their constitutive nature to be non-phenomenal is presumably for their constitutive nature *not* to be directly experienced. It is

world with respect to which the utterance is to be evaluated. There is a mereological nihilist domain-determination function that renders the utterance ‘tables exist’ false, and commonsense domain-determination function rendering it true (Chalmers 2007 p. 30). I don’t think this is of any help to Chalmers (2007 p. 30) here though, at least not so long as one “imposes [the] further constraint that an “admissible domain ... be consistent with the qualitative character of a given world”. In such a case, a domain determination function can only admit phenomenal property instances into the domain of quantification for a given world if the qualitative character of that world *suffices* for there to be such property instances, and one is still only immediately acquainted with the truthmakers for claims that such property instances exist inasmuch as one is immediately acquainted with those aspects of the qualitative character of the world that render it thus sufficient.

difficult to see how this might be so. The existence of phenomenal properties isn't an extra-experiential fact acquaintance-based realists *infer* on the basis of experience. They insist upon the existence of phenomenal properties because they experience *them*.

We appear to be very close to having established the Constitution Thesis by way of an analysis of the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism. The phenomenal interpretation of premise (1), we have seen, articulates one of Robust Realism's fundamental tenets, that instances of phenomenal properties are introspectively revealed. The phenomenal interpretation of premise (2) articulates a conceptual truth regarding the nature of constitution. What about premise (3)? It might be remembered that the above formulation of the Revelation Argument is an adaption of Chalmers' formulation which substitutes 'unrevealed properties' for his 'vast array of microexperiences'. Given that unrevealed properties are any properties that *don't* reveal themselves in the phenomenal manner that premise (1) has it that the nature of consciousness is revealed in, premise (3), thus adapted, is basically a superfluous tautology, stating that properties which, by definition, aren't phenomenally revealed in introspection aren't phenomenally revealed in introspection. All the heavy lifting is done by the first two premises. Once it is established that the existence of the nature of consciousness is phenomenally revealed in introspection, and that whatever constitutes the being of that nature is part of the existence of that nature, anything not thus revealed is ruled out as a prospective constituent. The conceptual entailment between the fundamental tenets of Robust Realism and the Constitution Thesis is secured. The constitutive nature of all that is phenomenally revealed in consciousness is exhausted by what is in fact phenomenally revealed. That non-phenomenal properties aren't phenomenally revealed is true by *definition*. This is likewise true for unexperienced but nonetheless experiential constituents postulated by the likes of Strawson (2006b p. 261). That they aren't

thus revealed is presumably what is meant in saying that they are ‘unexperienced’. Robust realists must rule out any such constituents on pain of straightforward contradiction. The situation with respect to some of the other potential constituents discussed earlier is a little more complicated. Consider Rosenberg’s (2004 pp. 165, 168, 239, 240, 246) ‘context independent’ phenomenal property instances, unextended colour, colourless extension and the like. It’s not true by *definition* that consciousness isn’t constituted by such properties. But conceptual analysis of Robust Realism’s fundamental tenets isn’t the *only* desideratum guiding our exploration of its metaphysical implications. Descriptive phenomenology also has a part to play, and it would most definitely seem that certain phenomenal properties, phenomenal colour and extension for instance, are only ever revealed in a state of interdependent coinstantiation. *If* context independent versions of such properties *aren’t* phenomenally revealed, and *descriptive phenomenology* seemingly attests to this, *then* Robust Realism rules out their participation in the constitution of consciousness on account of its conceptually entailing the Constitution Thesis.

8. Conclusion

The Constitution Thesis is conceptually entailed by the definitive commitments of Robust Realism. Robust realists must therefore reject any account of consciousness that postulates ‘hidden’ constituents.

Chapter 4

1. Introduction

Robust realists face the theoretical problem of explaining the connections between the experiences of individual subjects and an (apparently) metaphysically real world. In this chapter I argue that the metaphysical connections that robust realists typically appeal to in facing this challenge cannot be had. Experiences, as Robust Realism characterises them, can neither inhabit an objective spatiotemporal universe nor causally interact with one from without. I consider, first, views on which spatiotemporal properties are metaphysically primitive. I then consider role-theoretic functional accounts of spatiotemporal properties and the nomological connections such accounts invoke.

I focus first on the issue of the spatiality of consciousness, itself part of the acknowledged problematic here since Descartes' famous characterisation of consciousness as essentially non-spatial. In section 2, I examine Colin McGinn's case for the Cartesian non-spatiality thesis, rejecting McGinn's claim that the thesis reflects our ordinary intuition and rebutting his arguments in favour of it.

In section 3, I discuss McGinn's distinction between phenomenal and causal criteria for spatially locating consciousness. Discussion of the powerful motivations we have for adopting each criterion then helps bring forward what I believe to be the real issue regarding the spatiality of consciousness. Any plausible case for the phenomenal criterion for locating consciousness, I argue, highlights the fact that, in order for experiences to occupy a region of space, they must constitutively embody the appropriate dimensions. Any plausible case for the causal criterion highlights the differences between phenomenal and objective spatiality, underlining the extent to which intuitive support is lacking for the claim that objective spatial

properties are phenomenal properties. Combining these considerations with the Constitution Thesis, I present an argument to the effect that consciousness cannot be located in objective space so long as objective space is characterised (as it typically is) as a non-phenomenal, metaphysically primitive dimension. In section 4, I argue that exactly analogous considerations rule out consciousness being located in objective time, so long as objective time is characterised as contemporary realists typically characterise it (that is, as a metaphysically primitive, non-phenomenal fourth dimension). I suggest that the longstanding asymmetry in the treatment of the spatial and the temporal case is to a degree understandable, but nonetheless unjustified.

In section 5, I give reasons for questioning the commonplace assumption that space and time are non-phenomenal. This suggests that there might still be some possibility of locating consciousness in space-time. Taking cues from Galen Strawson, I then develop a phenomenally constitutive account of space-time that might appear to allow our experiences to be housed within it. I conclude, however, that the phenomenal finitude of our experiences disallows such a possibility.

If the argument to this point is correct, then it seems difficult to argue that our experiences are constitutively embedded in a dimensional manifold that is metaphysically primitive. This is an unhappy result for robust realists who also wish to endorse a Humean nomology, as it implies that experiences cannot take up position in the kind of ‘Humean mosaic’ from which such a nomology is ordinarily derived. Taking cues from John Foster, In section 7, I develop a view appealing to relations of shared token phenomenal content as the ground of Humean nomological relations between states of a phenomenally constituted physical universe and (partially) constitutively extrinsic experiences.

In section 7.1, I argue that a four-dimensional version of this view, premised upon Foster’s notion of a time-field, is phenomenally specious. I contend that experiences admit of a

primitive non-dimensional dynamism that renders them incapable of being constituted by properties apt to feature in a four-dimensional metaphysics. In section 7.2, I argue that while a presentist version of the Fosterian view is possible, such a view is simply implausible and constitutes a theoretical cost for the robust realist. Robust realists of a naturalistic persuasion would therefore do well to explore other potential metaphysical connections between experiences and a metaphysically real world.

Once objective spatiotemporal properties have been distinguished from spatial appearances, it becomes somewhat less plausible that we have any kind of primitive conceptual grip on them. In section 8, I use this fact to motivate a discussion of the role-theoretical *functional* characterisation of such properties endorsed by Foster and Chalmers.

Finally, in section 9 I examine the kinds of causation invoked by these accounts. I consider and argue against structural Humean, necessitarian and non-structural Humean views.

2. McGinn on Consciousness and Space

The view that consciousness is non-spatial is by no means without precedent, finding its origins in Descartes (1988 p. 99), who maintains the very *idea* he has of the human mind is that of “a thinking thing ... not extended in length, breadth or height”, thereby counting the non-spatiality of consciousness among what he considers to be a priori knowable conceptual truths. Colin McGinn (1995 p. 97) speaks of Descartes’ non-spatiality thesis as though it were the championing of common lore: “It is hard to deny that Descartes was tapping into our ordinary understanding of the nature of mental phenomena when he formulated the distinction between mind and body in this way - our consciousness does indeed present itself as non-spatial in character”. Contrasting “a visual experience, E, as of a yellow flash” with the “complex of neural structures and events” associated with it, McGinn (1995 p. 97) writes,

... E seems not to have any of these spatial characteristics: it is not located at any specific place; it takes up no particular volume of space; it has no shape; it is not made up of spatially distributed parts; it has no spatial dimensionality; it is not solid ... E seems not to be the *kind of thing* that falls under spatial predicates.

While I do think the non-spatiality of consciousness, as acquaintance based Cartesian realism characterises it, is a priori knowable, knowable merely by reflecting upon core Cartesian commitments and any viable account of the nature of spatial properties, I nonetheless find McGinn's comments perplexing. Something can be a priori knowable without being obvious, and the non-spatiality of consciousness is far from obvious. Far from being part of our ordinary understanding of mental phenomena, Lycan (2009 p. 554) has recently described the thesis as "antique and weird". Pre-philosophical naive realism has it that visual object-surface-appearances *are* object surfaces, which, of course, have extension, and some who have come, by way of philosophical reasoning, to dissociate visual appearances of things from the things themselves have nonetheless maintained that such appearances are extended. Regarding Locke's (1961 vol. 1 p. 106) claim that the ideas that the spatial properties of physical things give rise to are "resemblances" of those self same properties, Mackie (1976 p. 13) writes, "He means, surely, that material things literally have shapes as we see shapes, feel shapes, and think of shapes". As Mackie sees it, Locke is attributing the very same spatial qualities to ideas as to the objects they represent. A thing being square is "its having a shape-quality which is just like the shape-quality which we find in the experiential content to which the thing gives rise" (1976 p. 15).⁸⁴ Other philosophers have rejected Lockean similitude, in

⁸⁴ The qualifier 'surely' might be thought a bit strong, as something can resemble something without being anything close to 'just like' that something. Locke's (1961 vol. 1 p. 106) claim that the spatiotemporal patterns of ideas of primary qualities "do really exist in the bodies themselves" could be read as the claim that there is an isomorphism between the *phenomenally* spatiotemporal patterns embodied by ideas and the *objectively* spatiotemporal patterns embodied by the things giving rise to them. I nonetheless think Mackie's interpretation likely correct, this more cautious interpretation being anachronistically out of step with the geometric naivety of the period, as well as the insensitivity to the *x*-of-appearance/appearance-of-*x* distinction that was characteristic of pre-Kantian empiricism, and much post-Kantian empiricism for that matter. In any case, heavyweight

its strong form at least, but have nonetheless maintained that experiences are objectively extended, occupying a region within the skull.

McGinn (1995 pp. 98, 100) advances two arguments in defence of Descartes' thesis:

The Argument from Perception – Our states of consciousness aren't perceived, so "perceptual geometry gets no purchase on them".

The Argument from Spatial Exclusion – A "well known metaphysical principle has it that no two material objects (of the same kind) can occupy the same place at the same time ... If the essential mark of the spatial is competition for space, as the metaphysical principle records, then the mental lacks that essential feature".

The central premise of the Argument from Perception, the claim that states of consciousness aren't perceived, is not entirely uncontroversial. For anyone who thinks sense-data constitute "immediate objects of perception", the geometry of visual experience *is* perceptual geometry (Jackson 1977 p. 119). But even if one thinks experiencing something altogether different from perceiving, it remains unclear *why* perceptual geometry should have no purchase on states of consciousness. McGinn presumably takes perception, unlike experiencing, to be a causally mediated physical process, and 'perceptual geometry' to be the geometry possessed by the objects which, by way of this process, are said to be perceived, and so not some special geometry peculiar to perception itself. I also assume he doesn't believe there to be some strong conceptual connection between spatiality and perceivability. Commonsense would have it that there are spatial properties that aren't perceivable, monstrously large and incredibly small dimensions for instance. If he is merely *stating* that the geometrical properties borne by such perceived objects cannot be borne by conscious experiences,

similitude has had at least one proponent, Jackson (1977 pp. 77-86, 102). I'll be discussing Jackson's (long since abandoned) similitude thesis soon enough.

McGinn is simply begging the question against the many philosophers who have maintained that it can.

Turning now to the Argument from Spatial Exclusion, far from being *the* essential mark of spatiality, it's not clear that competition for space is essential to the notion of spatiality at all. Prima facie, it doesn't seem conceptually incoherent for things to be superposed in space.

Casper the friendly ghost's non-physical constituents occupying the same regions of space as those of the wall he's passing through is no doubt fanciful, but not an affront to the logic of spatial predicates. That children are capable of entertaining such an *idea* suggests that competition for space might not form part of our intuitive *folk* conception of spatiality.

Obviously, this conception has little in common with the rarefied results of the conceptual revisions to ordinary spatial concepts motivated by scientific investigation or metaphysical reasoning. Some such revisions might give reason to invoke the principle. An extreme essentialist with regards to physical phenomena might think it principled to infer the *logical* impossibility of superposition from the *nomological* impossibility of superposition. Likewise, somebody who, in light of theoretical considerations, has abandoned metaphysical primitivism regarding spatial properties in favour of some kind of nomological constructivism, where spatial relations are born of more primitive *causal* relations, might rule out superposition on the grounds of, say, overdetermination. But these are relatively outré views. It would be very odd for some such view to serve as an implicit background assumption. I will find reason to discuss the view that physical space is nomically constituted later in this chapter, rejecting the possibility of consciousness taking up position space thus conceived for altogether different reasons, but only after having shown that the more conventional realist's conception of physical space logically precludes the objective spatiality of consciousness.

3. Phenomenal vs Causal Criteria

While McGinn's case for the non-spatiality of consciousness is arguably unsatisfactory, one point he makes, while once again falling short of establishing what he seemingly intends, serves nicely to bring into view what I believe to be the real problematic regarding the spatiality of consciousness. He points out that "causal criteria yield a different location for [experiences] from phenomenal criteria" (McGinn 1995 p. 99). Phenomenal criteria recommend locating visual experiences, for instance, "at various distances from perceivers and at various angles to their line of sight", as Frank Jackson (1977 p. 102) did in his earlier dualist period. This is the obvious choice for philosophers who, like those cited above, think visual appearances, in cases of veridical perception, have the same or similar spatial dimensions to the physical object surfaces they represent. In like manner, the early Jackson (1977 pp. 77-86) locates sensations in various parts of the body, or, in the case of phantom limbs, "near, but outside, the body". In contrast, causal criteria recommend locating experiences inside the head. McGinn (1995 p. 99) writes, "Well, it is true enough that [a] pain [in my hand] presents itself as being in my hand, but there are familiar reasons for not taking this at face value. Without my brain no such pain would be felt, and the same pain can be produced simply by stimulating my brain and leaving my hand alone".

McGinn seems to raise the issue of there being two conflicting criteria for locating consciousness in space only to dismiss one of the two instantly. He apparently thinks it obvious that causal criteria trump phenomenal criteria (McGinn 1995 p. 99). That philosophers like Jackson, who are more than aware of the causal considerations he cites, have nonetheless preferred the phenomenal criterion suffices to show that it isn't entirely obvious. In fact, there is a *prima facie* plausible, though, I will argue, mistaken, case to be made that the phenomenal criterion is the natural choice for the robust realist. It runs as follows:

The robust realist takes experience to be exactly as it's experienced to be. The experienced visual field is experienced to be a large three-dimensional spatial expanse, much like the expanse of physical objects it purportedly represents. Hence, the visual field is a spatial expanse. To locate consciousness in the brain is to deny consciousness the spatial dimensions it appears to have, thereby abandoning the fidelity to experience at the centre of Robust Realism.

The foregoing case for locating consciousness in space by way of phenomenal criteria is flawed, but it does bring an important part of the problematic regarding the spatiality of consciousness into view, namely that how something takes up position in space is a matter of what spatial *dimensions* it possesses. Much as the proverbial square peg will never fit the round hole, a visual field possessing approximately the same dimensions as the expanse it represents, where that expanse is significantly larger than a human skull, simply won't fit in a human skull. Spatial dimensions belong to the *constitution* of their bearers. As Foster (1982 p. 83) puts it, "we think of material space not merely as containing material objects, but as constituting the very form of their existence". Something can only occupy a region of objective space inasmuch as it constitutively embodies the appropriate objective spatial dimensions. Another central aspect of the problematic comes into view when we turn our attention to how those who eschew the phenomenal criterion for locating consciousness in favour of the causal criterion might respond to the foregoing case for the primacy of the phenomenal criterion.

Most contemporary philosophers would be more inclined to locate consciousness on the basis of the causal rather than the phenomenal criterion, but then most would also endorse some kind of reductivism about consciousness that denies experiences their apparent character. By robust realist standards, such philosophers aren't realists about such appearances at all. Galen Strawson (2011 p. 288), on the other hand, is a card carrying robust realist who likewise

maintains that “experiences are neural goings on”. Likewise, at least some of the views Chalmers regards as open possibilities with respect to the metaphysics of consciousness situate consciousness within the skull.⁸⁵ By light of the reasoning employed in the foregoing case for spatially locating experiences according to the phenomenal criterion, these philosophers have either a warped understanding of the logic of spatial predicates or massively erroneous beliefs about the size of the human skull. But while both Strawson and Chalmers think the phenomenal visual field is exactly as it’s experienced to be, they think the *phenomenal* spatial dimensions it embodies are altogether different from the *physical* spatial dimensions of the expanse it *represents* (Chalmers 2010 p. 122). What reason might they have for thinking such a thing? One might start with old-fashioned ‘relativity of perception’ based arguments. The aspects of visual appearances of objects comprising their apparent spatial dimensions differ depending on how distant they visually appear. As one walks towards an immobile visible object, the intrinsic constitution of the visual appearances of that object, in particular, the properties comprising their visual spatial dimensions, undergo change. Presumably, the objective spatial properties of the physical object undergo no such change. Such properties aren’t functions of distance relations to perceiving organisms. Further, one could make the case that objective spatial properties aren’t *visual* properties. Regarding them, Foster (1982 p. 58) writes, “these spatial qualities, as qualities of the physical world, do not have whatever is distinctive of their representation in any particular sense realm”. Here we are but a hop and a skip from the next key consideration within the aforementioned problematic, namely, that garden-variety realism has it that objective spatial properties aren’t *phenomenal* properties. Objects bearing them are thought to exist independently of experience. But for a robust realist merely wishing to make a case for

⁸⁵ I refer here to the various broadly Russellian views he discusses under the label of Type-F monism (Chalmers 2010 pp. 133-137).

rejecting the phenomenal criterion for locating consciousness in favour of the causal criterion, this final point proves too much. It combines with the previously established point, namely, that occupying a region of space is a matter of constitutively embodying the relevant dimensions, and the previously discussed Constitution Thesis, to make a relatively compelling case for the impossibility of locating consciousness anywhere:

The No Standard Spatial Dimensions Argument (NSSD)

- P1) Objective spatial dimensions are constitutive properties of all that exists in physical space.
- P2) All constitutive properties of consciousness are phenomenal properties.
- P3) Objective spatial dimensions aren't phenomenal properties.
- C) Consciousness doesn't exist in physical space.

Confronted with NSSD, most contemporary philosophers would likely reject P2, but rejecting that isn't an option so long as one is exploring the commitments of Robust Realism. P2 follows directly from the Constitution Thesis, which has been shown to follow from fundamental robust realist tenets. The other premises, while not universally accepted, articulate aspects of what we might call *standard spatial realism*. Standard spatial realism has it that physical space and the physical denizens thereof are *non-experiential* in their constitutive nature. A physical thing can bear physical dimensions without experiences being in any way implicated. Standard realism also characterises spatial properties as *metaphysically primitive*. A physical object's spatial dimensions have no further non-spatial constitution. Finally, standard physical realism takes space to be a *dimension*, with all that would ordinarily be thought to connote (i.e. to comprise continuous, smoothly integrated, relatively homogenous dimensional properties) and characterises spatial occupation in terms of embodying such dimensional properties. Some take space itself, not just spatial properties,

to be metaphysically primitive.⁸⁶ Others maintain that the metaphysically primitive dimensional properties and distance relations of objects are constitutive of space.⁸⁷ But this is a schism *within* the standard spatial realist camp. NSSD suffices to show that some aspect or other of standard spatial realism must be abandoned if consciousness, as robust realism characterises it, is to take up position in objective physical space.

4. Standard Temporal Dimensions and the Constitution Thesis

My reason for first discussing the issue of the objective spatiality of consciousness in isolation from that of its objective temporality is that there has been a historical asymmetry in the treatment of the two cases. As Dainton (2000 p. 60) puts it, “according to a long-standing tradition consciousness is essentially temporal but wholly non-spatial”. I’d now like to broach the question of whether this asymmetry has any basis in reason. This would be the case if it were something peculiar to space, something that didn’t generalise to the time case, that somehow excluded the spatiality of consciousness. If the case for non-spatiality rested, for instance, upon the metaphysical principle invoked by McGinn, according to which different things can’t occupy the same location at the same time, there would be reason to think so, as the principle has no temporal analogue. But NSSD hinges upon the standard spatial realist conception of spatial dimensions as non-phenomenal and constitutive of their bearers, and these features *do* generalise to the time case so long as one is assuming the temporal analogue of standard spatial realism, *standard temporal realism*. Standard temporal realism has it that time is a continuous metaphysically primitive non-phenomenal fourth *dimension*, in addition to the three spatial dimensions. Physical things are characterised as ‘space-time worms’, *embodying* non-phenomenal temporal dimensions much as standard spatial realism has it that

⁸⁶ For a defence of absolutism of this kind in the face of much historical criticism, see Earman (1970).

⁸⁷ For a thoroughgoing exposition and evaluation of relationism, see Hinckfuss (1975).

they embody non-phenomenal spatial dimensions.⁸⁸ Possession of such temporal dimensions is likewise irreducible to possession of more fundamental non-temporal properties. In such a case, one can invoke the exact temporal analogue of NSSD:

The No Standard Temporal Dimensions Argument (NSTD)

- P1) Objective temporal dimensions are constitutive properties of all that exists in objective time.
- P2) All constitutive properties of consciousness are phenomenal properties.
- P3) Objective temporal dimensions aren't phenomenal properties.
- C) Consciousness doesn't exist in objective time.

My extension of the same line of argument to temporal properties is likely to raise some eyebrows, this in spite of the indisputable parity of reason between the two cases so long as space and time are assumed to be as standard spatial and temporal realism characterises them to be. As the above quote from Dainton indicates, temporality is considered by many to be *essential* to experience in a way that space isn't. Regarding the prospect of fundamental physics abandoning spatiotemporal categories, Strawson (2006a p. 9) writes, "Note that if temporality goes, i.e. not just spacetimeTM but temporality in any form, then experience also goes, given that experience requires time". No analogous concern is expressed with respect to spatiality. That experience requires time might strike one as so obvious as to be trivial, but as noted in the discussion of McGinn, that experience is non-spatial is less than a folk truism, and the asymmetry in the treatment of the two cases is arguably attributable to a long-standing philosophical blind spot.

⁸⁸ For an introductory exposition of "orthodox four-dimensionalism", see Chapter 1 of Sider (2001).

That experience is essentially temporal seems trivially true because we *experience* temporal *phenomena*. Stuff *appears* to change, move etc. In other words, experience is *phenomenally* temporal, temporal in its *experiential* nature. But this is altogether different to its being temporal in some non-phenomenal objective sense. Any temporal aspect of experience, inasmuch as its being is revealed in experience, is, in its fundamental nature, appearance. By contrast, standard temporal realism has it that the temporal properties of physical things aren't appearances at all. It is this consideration that famously led William James (2008 p. 643) to insist upon the difference between a succession of appearances and the appearance of succession, a distinction which, due to its having been later taken up by Husserl (1964 p. 31), has become something of a standard commitment for those working within the phenomenological tradition. In section 7.1, I will argue that in characterising phenomenal temporality as the appearance of *succession*, James laid a phenomenologically inadequate foundation upon which many phenomenologically inadequate theories of time consciousness have subsequently been built. But the distinction between objective temporal properties and temporal appearances remains intact, and while very few robust realists have followed Jackson in naively identifying experienced space with a region of objective space, some have seemingly opted for an exactly analogous naive realism in the case of time, taking experienced time to *be* objective time.⁸⁹ By way of example, I will briefly consider two accounts, those of Strawson and Dainton.

Strawson at least appears to take objective temporal properties of consciousness to register directly in experience. A subject's experience, according to Strawson, "will standardly have

⁸⁹ Geoffrey Lee (2007 p. 373), a philosopher who is far more attentive than most with respect to the distinction between objective temporality and temporal appearances, makes an explicit comparison between this kind of naïve temporal realism and the kind of Naïve spatial realism endorsed by Jackson: "It is a kind of resemblance theory of mental representation, in the same camp as the theory that experiences have spatial and colour properties that match those of external objects, as if your eyes were firing brightly coloured phenomenal rays into the environment".

for it the character of being part of a more or less continuous process of experience”, and as a result the subject is even apprised of the purported stop-start nature of this process,⁹⁰ experiencing consciousness as “gappy” and “continually restarting” (Strawson 2003 pp. 289, 290, 311). These comments *could* be given a representationalist reading, but there is nothing to disabuse the reader of the far more natural direct realist interpretation.

Barry Dainton presents a more perplexing case. His account of phenomenal temporality is an attempt to address the problem of accounting for the appearance of temporal succession.

Dainton suggests that part of the answer is to have it that co-experiencing be a diachronic phenomenal relation pertaining to objectively successive phenomenal contents. But if the objective succession of such contents is a non-phenomenal relation, this alone couldn’t account for the appearance of succession, as the co-experienced contents bearing such a *non-phenomenal* relation to each other is altogether different to their bearing the *phenomenal* succession relation the appearance of succession demands.⁹¹ As Geoffrey Lee (2014 p. 34) puts it, “the objective duration of an experience is not a phenomenally relevant feature of it”. Dainton also appears to identify experienced and objective time.

Unlike Jackson’s identification of experienced space with a region of objective space, the identification of experienced time with objective time doesn’t come across as a radical affront to naturalism. While the former has it that phantom limb sensations occur in empty space, the latter merely has it that the time found in experience is the same time experience is found in, a view attractive in its commonsensical simplicity. I’m inclined to think it is the *prima facie* plausibility of such naïve realism that gives impetus to the intuition that experiences are

⁹⁰ He thinks each of the “intrinsically unified episodes of experience” comprising “the conscious life of a human being ... last for a maximum of about three seconds” (Strawson 2003 p. 289).

⁹¹ In both these philosopher’s defence, neither of them are strongly wedded to the view that objective succession *is* non-phenomenal, as standard temporal realism has it, both being at least open to the kind of pan-phenomenal Russellian monism to be discussed shortly. Both are nonetheless guilty of failing to see that objective succession can only register in consciousness if it is a phenomenal relation. Both merely consider its being so a live option (Dainton 2000 pp. 7-10; Strawson 2006b p. 260).

essentially objectively temporal. If there is an argument for the essential objective temporality of consciousness that isn't founded upon the assumption that its objective temporal properties are directly experienced *as such*, I'm yet to encounter it. But it has been shown to be *too* naïve, at least so long as we continue to assume, as required by standard temporal realism, that objective succession isn't one and the same as the appearance of succession. Of course, inasmuch as it purports to demonstrate not merely that an objective succession of appearances does not alone account for the subjective appearance of succession, but rather, that the objective succession of appearances is altogether impossible, NSTD goes well beyond the conclusions of James and Husserl.

5. NSSD and NSTD: An Appraisal

As with NSSD, most contemporary philosophers, when confronted with NSTD, would reject P2, which I have argued to be a consequence of Robust Realism's commitment to the Constitution Thesis. If the robust realist is to reject the conclusion of either argument, it must be by way of rejecting the premises articulating aspects of standard spatial and temporal realism. Yet abandonment of P1 or P3 in either seems a significant cost. P1 in each argument articulates, or at least has the *prima facie* air of articulating, what we take existence in space or time to *mean*.

This is particularly true in the case of NSSD. To speak of a chair being in space but having no spatial dimensions, or having spatial dimensions merely as some kind of addendum to its constitution, is seemingly to do violence to the concept of a chair. The situation is a little different with NSTD. It might be said that P1 in NSTD articulates what existence in time means for a four dimensionalist. The notion of existence *in* time might not be as meaningful for the presentist, for whom existing *in* the present might be said to be one and the same as simply existing. P3 in each argument seems like plain common sense, but the foregoing

discussion goes some way towards rendering questionable any claim to the effect that these are conceptual truths. As we have seen, there has been a tendency, even among the more well-known philosophers, to conflate phenomenal and objective spatial and temporal properties, which might suggest a degree of ambiguity and even incoherence in our *folk* notions of objective spatial and temporal properties. Obviously, physics has done so much to refine and revise our folk conception of space and time that whether or not P3 articulates an aspect of our incredibly inadequate folk conceptions of spatiotemporal properties might be thought entirely irrelevant, but I shall argue that comparable ambiguity belies the sophisticated representations of these properties furnished by the physical sciences. To explain how, I must address an issue already touched upon in Chapter 1 in a little more detail. To begin with, let us return to Chalmers' (1996 p. 118) essentially structural-cum-dynamical characterisation of physical theory:

... the basic elements of physical theories seem always to come down to two things: the structure and dynamics of physical processes. Different theories invoke different sorts of structure. Newtonian physics invokes a Euclidean space-time; relativity theory invokes a non-Euclidean differential manifold; quantum theory invokes a Hilbert space for wave functions. And different theories invoke different kind of dynamics within those structures: Newton's laws, the principle of relativity, the wave equations of quantum mechanics.

While all realists maintain that such structural cum dynamical properties are really instantiated, they are divided as to what that *means*. To ask this question is to open a veritable can of worms. To start with, philosophers are still divided as to whether a complete structural cum dynamical description of reality is one and the same as a complete description of reality, whether or not such properties are ontologically *sui generis*. Spatiotemporal properties

feature in such theories as fundamental structural properties.⁹² Some maintain that the instantiation of such structural properties is a matter of *something*, some substance or intrinsic nature, a quiddity, to use contemporary philosophical parlance, *bearing* structure.⁹³ Structure can't simply exist in and of itself. In like manner, some think modally articulated dynamical properties such as dispositions must be grounded in some intrinsic categorical nature.⁹⁴ Also, while Chalmers describes physics as uncovering structure *and* dynamics, some have considered this to be a pleonasm. Some have maintained that dynamics are a mere function of structure, others that structure is a mere function of dynamics.⁹⁵ Structural Humeanism, which has it that claims about dispositions, laws and such merely articulate regularities embodied in physical reality's four-dimensional structure, has ordinarily been motivated by concerns about the scrutibility of sui generis dynamical properties,⁹⁶ but it might just as easily be motivated by an austere naturalistic attitude of the kind that treats any metaphysical attempt to move beyond physics with suspicion. As Rosenberg (2004 pp. 143, 144) points out, current physics requires little more than regularities: "A description of coevolving fields is the centerpiece of quantum mechanics" and "the successful use [of Schroedinger equations] requires us only to assume regularity in the succession of states" they "plot ...

⁹² If this ceases to be the case, as some physicists are predicting, it won't be because physics has ceased to model physical reality in structural terms, but rather, because a more sophisticated structured coordinate system has replaced the space-time of old, one in which space-time can be emulated, at least in a coarse grained fashion, at a higher level. Hence Chalmers (2012a p. 325) describes the properties spatial properties might potentially derive from as properties of more fundamental *spaces*, "those of a quantum-mechanical configuration space, or an underlying space in a theory of quantum gravity such as string theory". Clearly, any such transition will only have a terminological impact upon the established dialectic. Belonging to the universe such theories purport to model will still be a matter of constitutive inclusion within such a 'space', which will still be a matter of constitutively possessing the 'spatial' properties it purports to represent. On the standard assumption that such properties are non-phenomenal, consciousness won't possess the requisite pre-spatial 'dimensions'.

⁹³ See Foster (2008 pp. 46, 81).

⁹⁴ For a discussion of the considerations motivating this view, see Blackburn (1990). For argument to the effect that they aren't compelling, see Holton (1999).

⁹⁵ Lewis (1986a pp. ix-xii) is the most famous contemporary proponent of the former view. In section 8, I'll discuss Foster's (2008 pp. 128-144) argument to the effect that space *could* be at least partially nomologically constituted. Rosenberg (2004 pp. 213-217) attempts a more thoroughgoing reduction of spatiotemporal properties to nomological properties.

⁹⁶ See Lewis (1999 p. 40).

against points in time”. But there have also been philosophers, like Rosenberg (2004 p. 213-217) himself, who, rejecting Humeanism, usually on the grounds that it is insufficiently explanatory, have endorsed the latter view, offering nomologically constitutive accounts of space-time.

The point is that refinements of spatiotemporal concepts *within* physical theory do nothing to resolve the foregoing issues, all of which will loom large in the ensuing discussion. Of particular importance to us at present is the notion that structural properties might need quiddistic bearers. This is directly relevant to the foregoing question of whether or not P3 in each of the foregoing arguments, the claim that the relevant dimensional properties aren’t phenomenal, articulates a conceptual truth. The issue of whether or not such structural properties might be nomically constituted will be broached later. Let us for now make the commonplace assumption that they aren’t nomically constituted, that they are either *sui generis* fundamental properties, pure structures borne by nothing, or fundamental modifications of some fundamental quiddistic nature.⁹⁷ Physics does nothing to settle the question of what intrinsic nature or natures, if any, bear the structural properties physics purports to pick out under the name of spatiotemporal properties. In particular, it doesn’t rule out the possibility that they are *phenomenal* natures. This idea, that phenomenal properties might constitute the intrinsic properties of matter, goes back to Russell (1954 p. 264):

The gulf between percepts and physics is not a gulf as regards intrinsic quality, for we know nothing of the intrinsic quality of the physical world, and therefore do not know whether it is,

⁹⁷ The issue of whether physical structural properties are fundamental *structural* properties, or functions of more fundamental structural properties, as might be the case if they were properties of a Matrix like computer simulation in a metaphysically prior world, is much like the foregoing issue of whether or not space and time are fundamental structural properties *within* physics. It leaves the basic dialectic intact. The question of whether or not consciousness can take up position in the thusly expanded *megaverse* remains, and the foregoing questions about the metaphysical fundamentality of spatiotemporal properties, whether they inhere in quiddities and such, reemerge as questions about the most fundamental concrete structural properties, whatever they might be. Let us herein assume spatiotemporal properties are not only physically basic, but also metaphysically fundamental *structural* properties, understanding that this doesn’t make them fundamental *tout court*, in the sense that they might inhere in quiddities or be nomically constituted.

or is not, very different from that of percepts. The gulf is as to what we know about the two realms. We know the quality of percepts, but we do not know their laws so well as we could wish. We know the laws of the physical world, in so far as these are mathematical, pretty well, but we know nothing else about it. If there is any intellectual difficulty in supposing that the physical world is intrinsically quite unlike that of percepts, this is reason for supposing that there is not complete unlikeness. And there is a certain ground for such a view, in the fact that percepts are part of the physical world, and are the only part we can know without the help of rather elaborate and difficult inferences.

The project of making good on Russell's vision has been an ongoing research program ever since.⁹⁸ Any such view that has matter possessive of an intrinsic phenomenal nature, and, at the same time, bearing non-phenomenal dimensional properties falls prey to arguments of the foregoing kind. But the foregoing quote doesn't merely suggest that phenomenal properties might constitute the intrinsic properties of *matter*, but rather, that they might constitute the intrinsic properties of the *physical world*, which presumably includes space-time itself, and so might for allow for phenomenal dimensional relations, avoiding this problem. In responding to McGinn's foregoing case for non-spatiality, Chalmers (1995 p. 417) suggests that the intrinsic nature of space itself, "the 'medium' in which the mathematical structures of space are embedded", might feature in the solution of the problem of somehow situating consciousness in physical space. However, his openness to the possibility of consciousness having non-phenomenal constituents leads him to then shrink back from the thesis that space might be intrinsically phenomenal, suggesting instead that it might be intrinsically protophenomenal (Chalmers 1995 p. 417). The Constitution Thesis rules out protophenomena, disallowing any such shrinking back. If there is to be any hope of this trick working, it will be by way of consciousness being constitutively embedded in a *phenomenal*

⁹⁸ Contemporary proponents of 'Russellian monism' include Chalmers (in some of his moods), Rosenberg (2004), Strawson (2006a, 2006b) and Lockwood (1989).

space-time medium, constitutively bearing the intrinsically *phenomenal* structural properties which are afforded a purely structural substrate neutral representation in physics. Galen Strawson at least tentatively flags this as a possibility. In setting out his Russellian stall, Strawson (2006b pp. 247, 260) suggests that we might “in the end have to posit a universe-wide sesmet [his acronym for a subject of experience that is a single mental thing] in order to posit the existence of many sesmets existing in a dimension that allows for their interaction”. If sense can be made of this idea, then far from articulating putatively necessary conceptual truths, P3 in each of the foregoing arguments might be straightforwardly false. Without getting too caught up in issues regarding the semantics of the terms of physical theory, there is at least a case to be made for the view that such terms denote the quiddistic realisers or realisations of physical structure and dynamics, rather than some proxy (for instance, the *role* of thus realising them). In such a case, if spatiotemporal dimensions are phenomenally realized, then spatiotemporal dimensions, as depicted in physical theory, will *be* phenomenal properties. I turn now to the question of whether sense can in fact be made of this idea. This will initially involve getting clear on what Strawson’s suggestive but not altogether clear remarks must mean if they are to be taken as offering a way around the foregoing arguments. I will then present an argument against the resulting view.

6. Cosmopsychism and Decomposition

Strawson’s (2006b pp. 247, 248) “smallist” panpsychism has it that “simple or non-composite ... microsesmets, e.g. electron sesmets or string sesmets,” compose “macrosesmets, e.g. human sesmets”. The latter are phenomenally constituted *phenomenal manifolds* of phenomenal properties, and assuming there *is* a universe-wide sesmet of the kind Strawson envisages, they will in turn be phenomenal constituents of this greater phenomenally constituted *phenomenal manifold* of phenomenal properties. Description of such sesmets as

phenomenally constituted *phenomenal manifolds* of phenomenal properties might appear pleonastic, my emphasising that they are *phenomenal manifolds*, peculiar and unnecessary. On the contrary, that the relevant manifolds of properties are phenomenal manifolds is an important non-trivial point. If reality consists of nothing but individual ontologically discrete human and animal consciousnesses, inhabiting no shared medium short of reality itself, reality as a whole will be a phenomenally constituted manifold of phenomenal properties, but it won't be a phenomenally constituted *phenomenal manifold* of phenomenal properties. It won't meet Strawson's criterion for being a *sesmet*, as it won't be *an* experience. Rather, it will be several discrete experiences that aren't *co-experienced*. The phenomenon of manifoldness isn't one and the same as the manifoldness of phenomena. A phenomenal manifold's manifold nature is itself phenomenal, it is *experienced*. This is the fact Chalmers (2010 p. 509) and Bayne intend to capture with their "phenomenal unity thesis", which has it that "necessarily, any set of phenomenal states of a subject at a time is phenomenally unified", where "two states are phenomenally unified when they have a *conjoint phenomenology*: a phenomenology of having both states at once that subsumes the phenomenology of the individual states".⁹⁹ The phenomenal unity thesis appeals to the idea of an objective time slice of consciousness.¹⁰⁰ Given that the objective temporality of experiences is currently contested, it would be preferable if this could be avoided. The necessity the phenomenal unity thesis claims for itself might be thought questionable. For my current purposes, I will substitute the term 'phenomenal manifold' for the term 'subject', thereby evading the vexed issue of what constitutes a subject, and lose the 'at a time' bit. We

⁹⁹ Notice this talk of the phenomenology of *having* phenomenal states makes the experiencing/having of experiences something belonging to the experiences themselves. Even those who think it makes sense to talk of an experiencing of phenomenology that is logically distinct from the phenomenology of experiencing, something like an act directed upon phenomenology by an extrinsic mind, must concede, so long as they are scrupulous robust realists, that there's also something it's like to co-experience all our phenomenology, and that this what-it's-like-ness belongs to the phenomenal constitution of a phenomenal manifold.

¹⁰⁰ Bayne (2010 p. 18) makes it very clear that "the temporal framework in question is that of clock-time, not that of the contents of experience".

are then left with an uncontroversially necessary *definitional* truth: “Necessarily, any set of phenomenal states of a phenomenal manifold is phenomenally unified”. That the states of a phenomenal manifold are phenomenally unified is what makes it a *phenomenal manifold*, a manifold the manifold nature of which is phenomenal.

Note that this modified version of the unity thesis allows for the inclusion of the phenomenally temporal aspects of our phenomenal manifolds within their phenomenally unified nature, which in turn might be thought to allow for the possibility of the universe-wide sesmet being the co-experiencing of the entire four-dimensional *spatiotemporal* universe. There is a line of thought that might be taken to confer a degree of credibility upon this idea.¹⁰¹ The fact that we experience temporal phenomena such as change, motion and sound has led some philosophers to follow William James’s (2008 p. 692) lead and speak of a phenomenal “*specious present*”, phenomenally comprising more than a mere instant, within which such temporal phenomena are experienced.¹⁰² From here it might be argued that inasmuch as there can be a phenomenal appearance of any temporal duration at all, as we supposedly know there can be from our own experiencing of a phenomenally constituted specious present, there seems to be no obvious logical bar upon there being a phenomenal appearance of an extremely, perhaps infinitely, long duration, though it is admittedly very hard, perhaps impossible, to imagine such a thing.

If Strawson’s universe-wide sesmet is a phenomenal manifold, it will be the co-experiencing of all the aspects of the dimensions it *constitutes*, including the sesmets within it and their various interactions. I emphasise that it constitutes these dimensions because Strawson’s (2006b p. 271) talk of the sesmet being universe-wide, and of “experience exist[ing] at every

¹⁰¹ I will soon argue that this line of reasoning to be specious, premised upon a mischaracterization of temporal phenomena.

¹⁰² In turn, James (2008 p. 602) was following the lead of E. R. Clay.

point in the spatial universe”, could be construed as meaning that it merely occupies every point of a dimension or dimensions it doesn’t constitute. If this is what Strawson has in mind, then the arguments of the previous section will apply here. Strawson (2006b p. 244) writes “‘The universe consists of experience arrayed in a certain way.’ Plainly this view involves no logical contradiction”. But if consciousness is as robust realism dictates, ‘arrayed’ is taken non-metaphorically, as is presumably intended, and the dimensions of space aren’t constitutively phenomenal, it has been decisively demonstrated that it does. The universe wide sesmet can’t be a vast spatiotemporal array of experience, only an experience of a vast spatiotemporal array. The view under consideration has our experiences embedded in space in much the same manner that object surface appearances are embedded in the visual space of our individual visual fields, by featuring in the appearance of a geometrically structured field, appearing both to intrinsically embody the geometry appropriate to that field, and appearing to occupy a finite location within it. They are in space, and perhaps time, solely by virtue of appearing to be so.

Chalmers (forthcoming b p. 17) has recently claimed that “a cosmopsychist view in which each of us is a distinct constituent of a universal consciousness ... suffers from a decomposition problem that seems just as hard as the combination problem [for pansychism]”. The combination problem is the problem of how micro-sesmet could ever constitutively yield macrosesmet. It arises given two background assumptions: that microsesmet are the quiddistic realisers of microphysical properties, and, more importantly, that they are already located in space-time. If Chalmers is right, in arriving at cosmopsychism by way of a dialectic born of problems concerning phenomenal properties being located in space, I am here coming at the same problem from the opposite direction. Chalmers doesn’t elaborate upon his claim, but I think that the decomposition problem arises for this view. The problem, as I see it, is that of the doubtful possibility of a *finite* experience, an experiencing

of only so much, being experienced *with* something else.¹⁰³ The finitude of our phenomenal manifolds belongs to their phenomenal nature; only experiencing so much is an aspect of what it's like to be us. Robust realism has it that the experienced nature of our phenomenal manifolds *is* their nature. If they are experienced to be finite, they are finite. It might not be immediately apparent that such phenomenal finitude rules against the possibility of our phenomenal manifolds being phenomenal components of a greater phenomenal manifold. The finitude of an entity usually doesn't preclude its being a mereological part of something else. Yet straightforward part-whole mereology does not obtain in this case. The finitude of our experiences doesn't disallow their being straightforward parts of a greater whole. If reality admitted of nothing but discrete phenomenally finite manifolds, each such manifold will be a partial constituent of reality. But we are considering a situation where such phenomenally finite manifolds are *experienced* to be parts of a greater *experienced* whole, one constituting the *co-experiencing* of their phenomenally finite natures. Such a state of affairs *is* impossible. To experiencing what I experience is to experience only so much, what I experience and nothing else. For something to be the experiencing of exactly what I experience among other things is for it to experience what I experience and nothing else *and something else*, a manifest contradiction. A godlike mind can no more experience the finitude of our experiences without its phenomenal nature embodying that finitude than it can experience the colours of our phenomenal manifolds without its phenomenal nature embodying those colours.

¹⁰³ Phenomenal finitude affords experiences the “inherent boundaries” that form the basis for Rosenberg’s (2004 pp. 75-90) “boundary problem”. Rosenberg (2004 p. 81) takes it for granted that these are “middle-level boundaries”. I am arguing that on the current cosmopsychist view, they can’t be.

7. Intransitive Co-Consciousness

Call the foregoing argument the Argument from Finitude. If sound, it rules out our phenomenal manifolds being experiential components of a greater phenomenal manifold. Such a universe constituting manifold was the last remaining option for a *metaphysically primitive* dimensional manifold in which our experiences might be *constitutively embedded*. That our experiences can't constitutively feature within such a primitive structured dimension has further implications. In particular, it raises difficulties for those who account for causal transactions with experiences in Humean terms. If the argument is sound, experiences are incapable of featuring in a 'Humean mosaic' the broader patterning of which might serve as the basis for the derivation of a Humean nomology. The robust realist who still wishes to retain a metaphysically realist stance regarding the physical world appears therefore to be limited in choice to either a neo-Cartesian view that has it that our phenomenal manifolds are constitutively extrinsic to the *spatiotemporal* universe, or to the abandonment of metaphysical primitivism regarding space and time in favour of some form of spatiotemporal *constructivism* somehow allowing for the constitutive inclusion of our phenomenal manifolds. Both such views typically invoke non-Humean nomology. Advocates of the neo-Cartesian view will presumably claim significant metaphysical connections between experiences and the physical universe, particularly those parts comprising the neural correlates of consciousness. Non-Humean causal relations have at least historically played this role. Likewise, those who don't take spatial properties as primitive have tended to advocate a view according to which spatial properties and relations are a function of, or constituted by, non-Humean nomological properties and relations.

The robust realist of Humean persuasion may have an answer to this objection. Humean scruples are arguably consistent with a neo-Cartesian view that maintains a *constitutive* connection between our phenomenal manifolds and space-time, something tighter than mere

causal transactions from without. This view takes methodological cues from John Foster's constructive metaphysical project. It is worthy of discussion, in spite of its apparent oddity, as one of the few Humean views available within this set of commitments.¹⁰⁴

In setting out the foregoing cosmopsychic view, I temporarily gave credence to the idea that the experience which, according to the view, is constitutive of the entire universe, might be the co-experiencing of the entire extensity of time. This is a four-dimensionalist view, the universe-constituting-experience instantiating a phenomenal 'time-field', to borrow Foster's terminology. Had the finitude of experiences not presented an insuperable problem with respect to the situating of our experiences in such a universe, the issue would have arisen about how, exactly, our experiences were to be thus situated, both spatially and temporally. Consider temporal location. In order for something to be constitutively incorporated within a time-field of the kind endorsed by the four-dimensionalist, one that is, in a sense, staid and immutable, it must have a constitutive nature appropriate to doing so. Presumably it must be likewise staid and immutable. That our experiences do in fact have such a nature seems to be implicitly assumed by most contemporary robust realists (Chalmers 2010 p. 444; Dainton 2000, p. 177; Strawson 2003 p. 311). The fact we experience temporal phenomena has been taken by some to indicate that our own phenomenal manifolds are themselves instantiations of phenomenal time fields comprising the co-experiencing of short runs of phenomenally successive contents, a *specious* present, with each such specious-present-constituting-phenomenal-manifold having the kind of staid and immutable existence the four-dimensionalist attributes to all denizens of space-time. I have argued that our experiences are incapable of being situated in a primitive four-dimensional manifold, phenomenal *or* non-phenomenal, but if such a characterisation of our phenomenal manifolds is

¹⁰⁴ One more will be discussed a little later.

phenomenologically correct, the robust realist is tied to it whether or not our experiences are capable of being thus situated. Foster's ideas are relevant at this point. He takes our phenomenal manifolds to be instantiations of such time fields, but rather than assuming their situation within a primitive time dimension, Foster takes this as the departure point for a *constructivist* account of the streams of consciousness of individual subjects.

Foster suggests that 'streams' of consciousness, a "subjective time dimension" for "each mind", might be formed by way of the sharing of *token* phenomenal contents by distinct phenomenal manifolds, each of which comprises such a specious present. Each specious present "will be a sensation of a temporal pattern – the realization of a time-field", and a subjective time dimension consists of many such time-fields 'overlapping' by way of partially shared contents (Foster 1982 pp. 257, 258). One such specious present, *s*₁, might be the experiencing of A followed by B and then B by C, another, *s*₂, the experiencing of the very same succeeding of B by C but also of that self same C being followed by D, and so on. (To be clear, the succession of B by C in *s*₂ is the very same succession of B by C in *s*₁, not a second tokening of the same phenomenal type). While A belongs to the same unified experience as B and C, and B and C to the same unified experience as D, no experience unites A and D. Note that Foster's construction works on the assumption that the phenomenal relation of co-consciousness that pertains between all the components of a phenomenal manifold, by virtue of which they collectively comprise a *phenomenal* manifold, is an intransitive relation.

My use of cautionary scare quotes when speaking of such time fields 'overlapping' is that such talk runs the risk of conjuring misleading images of experiences taking up relations *within* a shared dimension, instead of *constituting* a subjective time dimension by virtue of a shared content relation. Likewise, the description of multiple experiences thus related as a *stream* is apt to invoke a misleading spatial image, that of a linear series of experiences.

There is nothing preventing some ‘later’ specious present in the ‘series’ begun in the previous paragraph, say, the co-experiencing of X followed by Y followed by Z, from thus ‘overlapping’ with the co-experiencing of X followed by Y followed by A, and this in turn ‘overlapping’ with the co-experiencing of Y followed by A followed by B, and this in turn ‘overlapping’ with the very same specious present we started out with, the co-experiencing of A followed by B followed by C. The specious present comprising of A followed by B followed by C isn’t distanced from that comprising of X followed by Y followed by Z in a time dimension. In conjunction with the other experiences involved, they *constitute* a subjective time dimension for an individual subject, and so are not constrained by dimensional constraints.

Foster next unifies the various individual ‘streams’ constructed in the foregoing manner within an intersubjective temporal framework. Thus far, no primitive temporal relations hold between distinct ‘streams’ thus constructed. Their components are neither simultaneous with, prior to, nor subsequent to each other. Foster’s (1982 p. 278) exposition is a little convoluted at this point, but the important point for our purposes is that he invokes “a time dimension in ... that component of ultimate reality which lies outside human minds” such that the “time of the component may form the basis for a temporal framework in which the human events are located”. Foster (1982 pp. 278-280) provides a specific example of what this component might be like. Metaphysical specificities aside, what matters is that the component embodies the structure the realist assumes the physical universe to embody.¹⁰⁵ One could be forgiven

¹⁰⁵ While Foster’s specific account of the nature of the component has little bearing on the ensuing dialectic, it is nonetheless worthy of a mention as it is a variation on the foregoing cosmopsychist view. While the foregoing view has it that there is *one* universe constituting experience, which constitutes an experiencing of the entirety of space-time, Foster (1982 p. 279) has it that a series of distinct phenomenal manifolds constituting the experiencing of the entire universe for a short duration, a specious present, form a stream in the manner just illustrated. For reasons of exegetical flow, I did not elaborate this option previously as an alternative form that cosmopsychic realism might take, but it should be clear that having done so would have added nothing to the debate as such a series offers no more of a possibility of constitutively incorporating our individual experiences

for saying it *is* the physical universe. We will find reason later for thinking things might be a little more complicated, that the *nomological topology* yielded by the psychophysical *laws* pertaining between this component and the constitutively separate human streams of consciousness constructed in the foregoing manner might be more deserving of that title, but this is a mere semantic point which need not hold us up here, where the aim is to get clear on Foster's *metaphysics*. If we temporarily identify this component with the physical universe, we can describe Foster's view as a neo-Cartesian view according to which our streams of consciousness are extrinsic to space *and* time, not just space, as traditional Cartesianism has it, but are nonetheless indexed to times by way of *causal* relations pertaining between them and the parts of the component comprising their neural correlates.¹⁰⁶

Foster's view invokes non-Humean nomology of the kind that I wish to set aside for later discussion. But the intransitive co-consciousness relations he invokes form the basis for the Humean view I am developing here. The view I have in mind has it that there are particular physical states instantiated within a four-dimensional *cosmopsychic* universe of the kind discussed previously, such that in every instance of their instantiation, certain components of those states (which, of course, are phenomenal) also feature in an additional phenomenal manifold in altogether different phenomenal relations. A strong type-type correspondence pertains between the relations these components bear to each other as components of the relevant physical states and those they bear to each other in the additional manifolds. The additional phenomenal manifolds are then the kinds of phenomenal time-fields our experiences are said to instantiate. A region of space time featuring a continuous series of the

than a single unified space-time constituting experience. No experiencing of all and only what we individually experience occurs in the series.

¹⁰⁶ Foster's (1982 pp. 277, 278) *specific* account of the nature of the component, as outlined in the previous footnote, might be more accurately described as Berkeleyan, but he acknowledges that this is only one *possible* form the component might take. Later, he writes, "The reason I have confined myself exclusively to mentalistic examples is that there are no others available: we cannot form any transparent conception of what a non-mental reality might be like. But I have not established that the ultimate reality has to be transparently conceivable".

relevant physical state types (say, a series of brain states had by a human being in a state of wakefulness) will correspond to a set of such time-fields, which, by reference to the temporal properties of the constituents they share with those brain states, might also be said to constitute a series.

If one liked, one could still have it that the aforementioned ‘overlap’ relations also pertain between the time-fields in the series. They could be matched by a constitutive overlap in the corresponding brain states. Time-fields *s*₁, the experiencing of A followed by B and then B by C, and *s*₂, the experiencing of the very same succeeding of B by C but also of that self same C being followed by D, could correspond to the brain states *b*₁ and *b*₂. These brain states in turn share a temporal part *p* which is of a kind which tends to have components united into a separate phenomenal manifold so as to constitute the phenomenal appearance exemplified in *s*₁ and *s*₂ by the succeeding of B by C.¹⁰⁷ Though this Humean variant on Foster’s view is capable of incorporating such ‘overlap’, it is somewhat unclear what motivates its postulation in the first place. That the individual time-fields within such subjective time dimensions share property instances with states that are subject to a primitive kind of temporal ordering does a better job of conferring temporal seriality upon them than the posited ‘overlap’. It will be remembered that the individual time-fields constituting such subjective dimensions aren’t placed at any genuine dimensional distance from each other by way of such ‘overlap’ relations. What’s more, such ‘overlap’ doesn’t suffice to account for experienced change because ‘overlap’ itself isn’t experienced. It is a non-phenomenal relation between phenomenal relata, much like the co-existence relation between the aforementioned discreet phenomenal manifolds invoked in the foregoing discussion regarding the nature of a

¹⁰⁷ I say *p* need only be of a kind that *tends* to have its components thus united because it need not do it in every instance. Perhaps its kind only does so when featuring in particular ‘wider’ states like *b*₁ and *b*₂. The important point is that if *p* features in two such consecutive states, the very same token instances of additional phenomenal relations between its components might feature in the additional phenomenal manifolds corresponding to each of those states.

phenomenal manifold, those inhabiting no shared medium short of reality itself. This is plausibly another instance of the invocation of non-phenomenal relations to account for aspects of phenomenology, in this case, its putatively stream-like nature.

The Humean credentials of this view should be relatively clear. While the individual time-fields sharing constituents with the various brain states aren't themselves located within the primitive Humean mosaic that the cosmopsychic universe instantiates, an objective law-like type-type relation pertains between various brain and time-field states. Such law-like relations are the product, not of inscrutable non-Humean necessitation relations, but rather, of the constitutive connections which pertain consistently throughout reality, the instantiation of a *metaphysical*, as opposed to a straightforwardly *temporal*, regularity.

7.1 Phenomenal Dynamism

My concern with respect to the foregoing view is that I believe it to be *phenomenologically* inadequate.¹⁰⁸ More specifically, I think it illicitly makes use of a spatial metaphor in an attempt to downplay those features of experience the robust realist must admit, yet that present intractable problems for it. The problematic metaphor is that of a time-*field*. This metaphor robs experience of its genuinely dynamical aspect. It is not the experiencing of phenomenal contents strewn across a time-field. It is, among other things, the experience of phenomenal contents *changing*. The change, of course, is phenomenal change, the appearance of change,¹⁰⁹ but just as phenomenal structure (as possessed by the visual field for instance) is at the same time the appearance of structure *and* the structure of appearance,

¹⁰⁸ Let the reader be forewarned that in this section in particular, the fact that our discussion is premised upon the conditional assumption of Robust Realism is implicitly assumed, as opposed to being perpetually restated. In particular, when making descriptive phenomenological claims, I will typically say that experiences are thus and so, as opposed to more cumbersome qualified statements like 'naïve phenomenology seemingly dictates that experiences are thus and so, and we are working on the assumption that they are exactly as they phenomenally appear to be', taking it as understood that such phenomenal reports, while an essential part of the kind of investigation being undertaken here, can be, and often are, mistaken.

¹⁰⁹ The cessation of consciousness at death, or upon transition into dreamless sleep, would count as an instance of the changing of appearances that isn't, at the same time, an appearance of change.

phenomenal dynamics are arguably both the appearance of dynamics *and* the dynamics of appearance. What I am suggesting is that our experience of change is at the same time the changing of our experience, that our experiencing is the experiencing of itself changing.¹¹⁰

The time-field metaphor is an attempt to portray the phenomenal specious present as something unchanged by the change taking place within it, something which somehow absorbs and neutralises the phenomenal dynamics within so they might take up position as fixed unchanging constituents of a four-dimensional stream. In contrast, I am suggesting that on this metaphysics, and given the underlying robust realist motivation, there can't be an experience of change that leaves experience unchanged.

Recall James, and later, Husserl's, characterisation of the difference between experience being *in* time and it being *of* temporal phenomena as that between a "succession of appearances" and an "appearance of succession". Although this undeniably alerted many philosophers for the first time to the peculiar issue of time consciousness, there is a sense in which it entrenched a misleading metaphor as the departure point for further enquiry. The term 'succession' denotes dimensional ordering, being just as appropriate in spatial context as it is in temporal contexts. While it comes quite naturally to think of time by way of spatial analogies, with events ordered in time much like numbers on a ruler, experience serves as the primary source of intransigent data for this conception of time. If change were *experienced* as a phenomenal succession relation between phenomenal contents, with the succeeded phenomenal content's nature remaining intact for its having been succeeded, four-dimensionalism would likely be pre-theoretic common sense, as opposed to being a counterintuitive idea accepted only on the basis of theoretical arguments.

¹¹⁰ This is not to say that it is the experiencing of itself changing *as* the experiencing of itself changing.

Barry Dainton (2000 pp. 114, 159), who convincingly critiques much of Husserl's account of time (and the positing of such phenomena as protentions and retentions), describing it as "a purely theoretical construction going far beyond the phenomenological data", nonetheless subscribes to the same succession based characterisation of phenomenal temporality: "... the succession of thoughts and perception is itself something we experience; the succession is not just a succession of experiences, it is a succession within experience". Dainton champions Foster's overlap theory, albeit in a form which assumes the overlapping takes place within an objective time dimension, holding it to be a plausible account of how such "phenomenal passage" might be accommodated within a four dimensionalist framework (Dainton 2000 pp. 165, 177). Regarding the temporal patterns instanced by individual specious presents, Dainton writes:

What is the character of these temporal patterns – is it static or dynamic? The answer is clear: It is dynamic, the flow or passage in experience is included in the phenomenal content of experience. The total experience that results from my seeing a ball move between P1 and P2 does not consist of stationary image of the ball at two different places. The content is *a ball moving*. Movement or animation is, as it were, built into the content from the start (Dainton 2000 p. 176).

In speaking of dynamism, movement and animation being 'built into the content' of phenomenal specious presents, Dainton is clearly using the static connotations of an architectural metaphor to counterbalance the dynamism he is imputing to their content. For all the dynamism of its content, the nature of the phenomenal specious present is fixed and unchanging. Yet surely this is implausible. Dainton's view wouldn't give rise to problems if the contents in question were contents these experiences merely *represented*. A conscious thought of an angry person need not be angry for instance. But the topic here is the *phenomenal* contents of such experiences, contents they *embody*. The phenomenal content of our visual field is coloured because it embodies phenomenal colours, dimensional because it

embodies phenomenal dimensional properties. Our experiences are likewise dynamical because they embody phenomenal dynamics. If Robust Realism is correct, our experiences can't embody these dynamic properties and be static and unchanging anymore than our visual fields can embody phenomenal colour and be colourless.

In place of such dynamics, Dainton offers us an appearance of succession. The total experience of a ball moving is the co-experiencing of phenomenal content comprising the appearance of a ball being at P1 and phenomenal content comprising the appearance of the same ball being at P2. The experience is said to be of the former content being succeeded by, or “flowing into”, the latter content, but this is not to be taken as the former content changing or transmuting into the latter content. The nature of the former content is unaffected by its being succeeded by, or flowing into, the latter content. This idea is familiar enough. It is the standard four-dimensionalist conception of change. The difference in this case is that Dainton's is a theory of experienced change, and not merely change – he claims that we *experience* change to be this way. Clearly, this is not so. When one experiences a ball move, one doesn't co-experience phenomenal contents comprising appearances of the ball being in however many different places.¹¹¹ One experiences change in one's visual field, where ‘change’ is taken in its naive dynamical sense, a sense having no more of an essential connection with the four-dimensionalist notion of succession than phenomenal colour does with surface reflectance properties. Phenomenal change (like many phenomenal types, phenomenal space, aural phenomenology, cognitive phenomenology etc) is a primitive notion not susceptible to further analysis. But we are seemingly as aware of it as we are any of the others. In the spirit of Robust Realism, holding he is reporting on plain phenomenological facts, Dainton (2000 p. 178) writes “Since the phenomenal is the realm of appearance, if it

¹¹¹ In particular, one definitely doesn't take in several distinct *total* states of the visual field.

seems to exhibit flow and passage, it does". Whatever is to be made of the flow and passage Dainton speaks of, experience definitely seems to change. So the very same considerations should lead one to conclude that it does.

That experiences lack the immutable nature required if they are to serve as building blocks for a four-dimensionalist's time medium should, I believe, be clear from introspection. That's not what they're like, and the robust realist works on the assumption that what they're like is how they are. Wiggle your fingers before your eyes. Does the token qualitative nature of the experience you have in doing so seem like something that might stay exactly as it is forever? The view that phenomenal property instances are thus staid and immutable, in conjunction with the robust realist commitment that experience acquaints us with the instancing of such properties, leads to an even stronger claim. It is not that we are experientially acquainted with property instances that potentially *could* thus 'eternally' exist, but rather that we are acquainted with their thus existing 'eternally'. The instancing of properties in a staid and immutable four-dimensional reality is, after all, their eternal and immutable instancing. If phenomenal properties are properties of this kind, to be acquainted with anything less is to be acquainted with something short of their instancing.

In summary, the same kinds of considerations typically invoked by robust realists as grounds for rejecting physicalism can likewise be invoked as grounds for rejecting constitution by properties apt to feature in a four-dimensionalist metaphysics. Physicalism, as we have seen, is typically rejected on the basis of a *phenomenological* appeal to intransigent features of experience, their immediacy, lack of internal structure, intrinsicity and such, in combination with an appeal to intuitions about what can be entailed by physical facts alone. No amount of topic-neutral information, it is said, can yield the kind of topic-specific information betrayed in experience. Something purely structural, we are told, can never entail something non-structural. But does it not seem equally certain that the kinds of staid and immutable

properties populating the four-dimensionalist picture of reality could never constitute primitive dynamism, *genuine* change, of the kind we seemingly encounter in experience? Robust realists are seemingly obliged to reject an *exhaustively* four-dimensional metaphysics on the very same grounds that they reject physicalism.

7.2 Presentist Cosmopsychism?

If Robust Realism is incompatible with four-dimensionalism in any case, the question might arise whether a *presentist* cosmopsychism is in any way tenable. This would trade the foregoing experience of the entirety of four-dimensional space-time for a phenomenal manifold embodying the present state of the universe. There would be nothing *specious* about the present state of the universe as constituted by such a phenomenal manifold. The term ‘present’, in this case, refers not to a point-like moment on a dimensional continuum, but rather, to whatever is in fact *present in reality*. The present state of the universe admits of genuine dynamism. The present is *changing*, but this is *real* change, not things differing at different points on an immutable continuum change. The universe constituting phenomenal manifold is both the appearance and embodiment of primitive phenomenal modes of mutation not subject to further analysis, be that in terms of distinct ‘earlier’ and ‘later’ components, or anything else. The modes of mutation *themselves* are present. Obviously, to experience the entire present state of the universe is not to experience what you or I experience and nothing else, so the Argument from Finitude is not seen off by this possibility. Our own experiences cannot exist within such a universe. But a presentist adaption of the foregoing Humean view might be thought worthy of consideration. Such a view, once again, would have it that in all instances of particular state types within the phenomenally constituted universal present, property instances constituting those state types appear in altogether different state types in

phenomenal manifolds constituting subjectivities like ours.¹¹² Again, there would presumably be a strong type-type correspondence pertaining between the initial state types and the different state types their constitutive components feature in.

I have no decisive argument against such a view *qua* metaphysical possibility. At the same time, I don't think there's much to recommend it. The robust realist wishing to retain as much of the naturalist picture as possible will likely object to the notion of a presentist universe simply because of the authority of contemporary physics which arguably supplants a neatly delineated space and time, separately treated, with a space-time manifold in which the two are inextricably constitutively linked. Any view characterising the universe as stuff merely distributed in space undergoing primitive non-dimensional change is likely to strike such a robust realist as intolerably unscientific. This is something of an inversion of an old problem. Russell (1954 p. 384) long ago pointed out that relativistic physics presented a problem for the Cartesian view that experiences, while completely non-spatial, were nonetheless in time. Geoffrey Lee (2007 p. 341) thinks Russell makes "a strong case for thinking that mental events occur in time *and* space". He writes, "The only way to avoid this argument would be to claim that they are neither in space nor in time, but that is an extreme position – for example, it would make the problem of mental and physical interaction particularly intractable" (Lee 2007 p. 30). An extreme position this might be, but it is one the robust realist wishing to retain four-dimensional realism regarding the physical world seems forced to accept. The question of how intractable a problem it presents with respect to the problem of mental and physical interactions will be addressed shortly, but it is worth noting that in Foster we have already encountered a phenomenal realist who works under the assumption that experiences are primitively situated in neither time nor space. The more naturalistically

¹¹² The relevant state types can, and, plausibly, in many cases *would*, be phenomenal states of mutation, the property instances, likewise, instances of modes of phenomenal mutation.

inclined robust realist will likely wish to explore such avenues first, in hope that it might be possible to retain Robust Realism *and* scientific scruples of this kind.

A second problem for the view is that it seemingly does away with any kind of relationship between the spatiality of our experiences and that of physical space by virtue of which the former might be said to bear a *representational* relationship to the latter. Jackson's identification of the phenomenal dimensions possessed by object appearances in our visual field with those of the real objects they represent is implausible, but we surely want the two to stand in *some* kind of essential relation. Were our experiences occupants of a four dimensional space-time manifold, more sense might be made of the idea of space and time serving as the *causal basis* for our spatial experiences, the manifold constituting the appropriate kinds of correlations and intermediate pathways between our spatial and temporal experiences and the spatial and temporal properties of constitutively prior events. In contrast, the view currently under consideration has it that the present of our phenomenal manifolds is the very same present experienced by the universe-wide sesmet. There are no constitutively prior events, or causal *pathways*, on this view. What is present is all there is. I leave this view unrefuted in any strong sense, but don't think this fact alone will earn it many adherents.

8. Topic-neutrality, Spatiotemporal Functionalism and Nomological Constitutivism

In discussing the foregoing view we have nonetheless touched upon an issue of some significance, namely, that some kind of *essential* relation is generally presumed to pertain between the spatiotemporal properties we experience in our phenomenal manifolds and the objective spatiotemporal properties of physical objects. That objective extension, and, if the physical world is four-dimensional,¹¹³ duration, are never encountered in experience might be thought to render both extension and duration somewhat opaque. Phenomenal realists who

¹¹³ A potential means of reconciling this with dynamism regarding experience will be discussed shortly.

are sensitive to the distinction between objective spatiotemporal properties and spatiotemporal appearances, and who are also metaphysical realists with regards to objective spatiotemporal properties, are wont to maintain that although we are unaware of the nature of such properties *qua* intrinsic properties of phenomenology transcendent things, we are nonetheless in a position describe them in *topic-neutral* terms.¹¹⁴ But as Chalmers (2012a p. 335) points out, this would suggest that our very *concept* of space is a role-theoretic *functional* concept. The essential connection between subjective and objective spatiotemporal properties is relevant here. Chalmers (2012a p. 335) writes, “On such a view, spatial concepts pick out that manifold of properties that serves as the normal causal basis of a corresponding manifold of properties in our spatial experience. Temporal concepts pick out that manifold of properties that serves as the normal causal basis of a corresponding manifold of properties in our temporal experience”. Understanding of the notion of phenomenology transcendent extension, for instance, doesn’t require having some “primitive grip” on a notion of extension that generalises beyond experienced extension (Chalmers 2012a p. 325). On the contrary, phenomenology-transcendent extension is a functional notion that *implicates* experienced extension. Chalmers suggests that objective spatiotemporal expressions might be “Twin-Earthable, perhaps picking out classical properties in a Newtonian world, relativistic properties in a relativistic world, and string theoretic properties in a string-theory world” (Chalmers 2012a p. 326). Once *conceptual* primitivism regarding objective spatiotemporal properties has been abandoned, the metaphysical primitivism that has been assumed thus far with respect to spatiotemporal properties seems likewise open to question. We have thus far assumed space and time to be *dimensions*, with all that would ordinarily be thought to connote, to comprise continuous, smoothly integrated, relatively homogenous and, most of all, *metaphysically primitive* dimensional properties, and we have characterised occupation of

¹¹⁴ For an example of how such topic-neutral descriptions might go, see Foster (1982 pp. 75, 76).

them in terms of embodying the dimensional properties they constitute or are constituted by, depending on whether one conceives of such dimensions in absolutist or constructivist terms. Foster (2008 pp. 128-144) provides an example of a situation where the functionally relevant manifold of properties diverges considerably from traditionally conceived dimensional properties, and takes the possibility of such a situation, in combination with the plausibility of functionalism regarding space, as reason to reject the primitive dimensional conception of spatial properties in favour of a more thoroughgoingly nomic conception. Foster (2008 p. 128) asks us to envisage an external reality E comprising of time, a space S of the primitive dimensional kind,¹¹⁵ mobile occupants of S, E-particles, and the E-laws governing their behaviour. To account for E's "relationship to us ... as the systematic controller of our sensory experiences", he posits "*link* laws, which make provision for, and regulate, forms of causal interaction between E and the realm of human mentality", referring to link laws and E-laws collectively as E-relevant laws. His example runs as follows:

Let us suppose that, with one crucial exception, the E-relevant laws impose the same constraints on events across the whole of S and time. The exception is this. Within S there are two wholly separate spherical regions, R1 and R2, of the same size, and a one-to-one correlation C between R1 points and R2 points, such that the distances between the points in each region are the same as those between their C-correlates in the other, and everything is nomologically organised, both with respect to what takes place within E and with respect to the causal traffic between E and human mentality, exactly as if – by the standards of what would be required for organisational uniformity – R1 and R2 were C-wise interchanged (with each point transferred to the position, relative to the space that lies outside the regions, of its C-correlate) (Foster 2008 p. 129).

Foster maintains that given that all the nomological gruesomeness invoked in this scenario has no bearing on "empirically projected topology", i.e. that everything relevant to the

¹¹⁵ For simplicity's sake, he conceives of S in Newtonian and absolutist terms (Foster 2008 p. 126).

exchanging of R1 and R2 is empirically inscrutable, it is the “functional – organisationally simulated – topology” born of the combination of E and the link laws, inverting the primitive dimensional locations of R1 and R2, that best deserves to be called physical space. This space isn’t a metaphysically primitive dimension. It’s a nomological construct, a system of constraints on experience.¹¹⁶ One might imagine far greater discrepancies in S’s organisation being ironed out at the level of the link laws, and the greater the part played by the link laws in the constitution of space as a nomic system, the more one might be inclined to entertain the possibility of doing away with S altogether. If space is a nomic system rather than a primitive dimension, the notion of being *in* space becomes somewhat metaphorical on this account. Being in space becomes a matter of featuring in space as a nomic economy; given that spatial functionalism defines space in terms of its nomic relatedness to experience, experience couldn’t feature more heavily.

It might be suggested that Foster’s example be extended so as to cover *temporal* properties by replacing S with a primitive space-time dimension and replacing R1 and R2 with appropriately analogous space-time regions, and having link laws likewise render their absolute dimensional location functionally irrelevant. There are complications here, owing to the fact that experiences, as I have already discussed, are primitively dynamical, admitting of a brute phenomenal species of change that is not analysable, as four-dimensionalists would have it, in terms of immutable natures occupying distinct regions of an immutable time dimension. Presumably, the primitive space-time dimension replacing S on this account will be such an immutable dimension, and the events therein will be immutable events comprising

¹¹⁶ Gregg Rosenberg (2004 213-217), another philosopher writing in the spirit of Robust Realism, proffers far more sophisticated nomologically constitutive accounts of both space and time, though they are seemingly premised upon a constitutive account of experience that has already been ruled out by the Constitution Thesis, one where properties appearing constitutively interdependent and inseparable in experience are the constitutive product of the bonding of ‘context independent’ instances of those self-same properties. For this reason, I won’t discuss them directly in text, though I discuss him further in my footnotes.

only of change of the latter kind. If whatever it is that constitutes the being of the link laws is likewise immutable, a problem emerges. Phenomenal change, one of the temporal aspects of experience that aspects of this immutable nomic network must causally subserve in order to ‘play the time role’, is testament to the mutable nature of experience. It is the phenomenal mutating of experience’s nature. Unlike the four-dimensionalist’s change, phenomenal change is a changing, however small, of the nature of fundamental reality itself. It’s difficult to make sense of the idea of an immutable reality causally subserving this, as no alteration in the immutable reality corresponds to that taking place in the experience – experience moves from being one way against this immutable background to being another. Recall Wittgenstein’s aphorism that “A wheel that can turn while nothing else turns with it is not part of the mechanism”. The advocate of this picture might well reply that it is the turning of the wheel itself, the phenomenal transition, which is necessitated by the immutable reality, as must be the case if that reality is to play the time role. But this is no less problematic. If an immutable nature renders a phenomenal change’s being necessary, it does so ‘for all time’, so to speak, while phenomenal change, far from being immutable, is the paradigm of transience. If the being of phenomenal change is to be rendered necessary by an immutable nature, it must be re-necessitated over and over as each phenomenal change transpires, thereupon ceasing to be. And if infinitely many reoccurrences of every phenomenal event seems undesirably counterintuitive, one would do well to attribute a similarly primitive dynamism to whatever it is that constitutes the being of the link laws, perhaps having it that their experience necessitating *activity* constitutes, or is subject to, some kind of dynamical passage across S, assuming one thinks it necessary retains such a primitive dimension.

9. Causing Consciousness

My discussion to this point is premised upon the coherence of the idea of a system of nomic constraints of the kind Foster envisages. Foster’s heavy duty realism about laws, which has

them constitutively stand apart from that which they ‘govern’, is likely to offend the sensibilities not only of Humeans, but also, perhaps, of the majority of contemporary necessitarians, who would be more inclined to claim such laws to be a function of the necessitating powers possessed of matter (whether grounded in its categorical nature, as quidditists about powers maintain, or the sum of its nature, as those that think physical entities are categorically ungrounded propensities maintain). But those who wish to posit nomological connections between phenomenal manifolds and something extrinsic to them could do worse than to conceive of such connections as Foster does. I have argued that consciousness is unable to take up position in the kind of primitive dimension that might serve as a “Humean mosaic” which such nomological connections might be read off. Moreover, while necessitarian views, on which nomological powers inhere in denizens of space, are intuitively attractive, this is arguably due to the fact that the nomic economy they support is ordinarily thought to be completely housed within space-time. That power-quiddities or categorically ungrounded propensities located in a primitive space-time dimension should somehow necessitate aspects of reality which are extrinsic to that dimension seems no less problematic than the supposition that non-power-imbued denizens of such a dimension can do so in conjunction with constitutively separate laws. In fact, the foregoing considerations regarding the mutable nature of phenomenal change might be said to speak in favour of the latter view. If the power-quiddities or dispositions of the former view are borne by, or constitute, immutable four dimensional natures, and if their being renders the being of transient phenomenal existents necessary, then such existents must be perpetually recreated, whereas the enacting of laws might constitute, or be subject to, dynamical passage.

The unusual nature of the causal transactions under consideration on this account is coming into view. Regarding Cartesian causal transactions between spatial denizens and non-spatial minds, Lycan (2009 p. 558) writes “By now we can all tolerate action at a distance. But action at a distance is at least at a distance”. In the case I am currently considering, not only are there no primitive *distance* relations between consciousness and whatever serves as the causal basis for its phenomenally spatial content – be this a manifold of quiddistic or non-quiddistic dimensional properties, of purely nomological properties, some combination of the two, or something altogether different such as an occasionalist god – there are also no primitive *temporal* relations between consciousness and whatever serves as the causal basis for its phenomenally temporal content. Consciousness might be said to stand in spatiotemporal relations by virtue of its implication in a space-time constituting nomic network. But this view faces difficulties similar to those facing Foster’s overlap theory. In order to be a *constitutive* account of a subjective time dimension, Foster’s overlap theory couldn’t have it that the overlapping of phenomenal specious presents was their overlapping in an objective time dimension. Likewise, there can be no appeal to primitive distance relations, and, more importantly, no appeal to primitive relations of *temporal precedence* in the explication of the nomic relations that are constitutive of consciousness’s spatiotemporality. If NSSD, NSTD and the Argument from Finitude are collectively sound, consciousness can’t bear any such relations to anything, as it is incapable of taking up position in a primitive dimension. The temporal priority and spatial proximity ordinarily associated with causality is absent in the case of the causation of aspects of consciousness. Such causation is non-temporal causation at no distance whatsoever.

The notion of a non-temporally prior cause is not without precedent, and I shall close this section by considering and then applying a parallel discussion in the philosophy of religion.

In his Second Way, Aquinas is generally thought to be speaking, not of temporally prior *originating* causes, but rather, of non-temporally-prior *sustaining* causes (Rowe 2007 pp. 337, 338).¹¹⁷ It might then be asked what kind of priority the purported causes of aspects of consciousness have with regards to those aspects of consciousness in virtue of which the two stand in an asymmetric cause-effect relationship to each other. In setting out Aquinas's Second Way, Sobel (2004 p. 179) takes the difficulty of the notion of "nontemporal ontological priority" to be reason enough to replace the premises making use of that notion with the following premise: "If something x stands in a series of efficient causes that lead to y, then x is other than y". This ensures that sustaining causes don't "loop back on themselves". Mere preservation of the irreflexive and transitive logical structure of the priority relation between sustaining causes and their effects might suffice for a sympathetic reconstruction of Aquinas's argument, but it arguably renders the essential nature of the relation somewhat opaque. Soon after, Sobel (2004 p. 180) makes some attempt to shore up the gap:

Whatever else they would be, sustaining causes would be *necessary* for the existence of the things they sustained. But that's not all they would be, for they would be *sustaining* these things and so engaged in 'activity' somehow sufficient for their existence.

This characterisation, taken in combination with the foregoing claim regarding the irreflexive and transitive nature of the *non-temporal* priority relation a sustaining cause holds with respect to its effect, offers about as much in the way of elucidation of the notion of a sustaining cause as I think is possible. I would, however, add one more clause. While the irreflexive nature of the priority relation rules against something being a sustaining cause of itself, it doesn't rule against something else of which it is a mereological component being its sustaining cause. Were this allowed, the mereological sum of my consciousness and anything

¹¹⁷ Though admittedly, these are often thought to be temporally *contemporaneous* with their effects.

else could be said to count as a sustaining cause of my consciousness, as if anything is *necessary* for the existence of my consciousness, the existence of my consciousness is – and the existence of my consciousness definitely *suffices* for the existence of my consciousness. It might be objected that the existence of my consciousness doesn't constitute *activity*. I'd reply firstly by recalling Sobel's cautionary use of scare-quotes in speaking of the activity of sustaining causes, and secondly by saying that while such an objection might work with respect to immutable natures, the being of consciousness is on a plausible robust realist account essentially active, and its existence in that active state surely constitutes activity that suffices for its existence. The functionalist about space-time doesn't think the causal basis of the spatial aspects of experience is the mereological sum of the actual phenomenal being of those aspects of experience and anything else you like. Sustaining causes don't constitutively incorporate their effects.

But if the sustaining cause of an aspect of consciousness doesn't constitutively incorporate that aspect of consciousness, how could its being, activity or whatever possibly *suffice* for the existence of that aspect of consciousness? Whatever else might be necessary for the existence of an aspect of consciousness, the existence of its phenomenally constitutive nature is. If the being or activity of the sustaining cause doesn't incorporate this phenomenally constitutive nature, the existence of the aspect of consciousness in question remains a *further fact*. Herein lies the central problem with the idea of anything making an aspect of consciousness happen, so to speak. Something in reality supposedly serves to make the aspect of consciousness happen. If that something doesn't constitutively incorporate that aspect of consciousness, it falls short of making the aspect of consciousness happen, as the 'happening' is a further fact. On the other hand, if it does incorporate it, rather than *making* it happen, it merely *constitutively incorporates* the happening, which seems to put into question the nature of the

relationship of sustaining causation. It might be suggested that, while that which in reality serves to make the aspect of consciousness happen doesn't constitutively incorporate that aspect of consciousness, it nonetheless renders its existence *logically necessary*. The term I'd contest in this case is 'renders' which implies further necessitating activity.¹¹⁸ Any such necessitating activity deserves to count among those aspects of reality serving to make the aspect of consciousness happen, and once again, it either does or doesn't constitutively include that aspect of consciousness.

My objection here is not to non-Humean talk of necessary connections between matters of fact.¹¹⁹ Rather, it is to the possibility of a particular kind of nomic asymmetry between consciousness and anything with which it might, by logical necessity, *coexist*. The possibility being questioned here is that in which something enjoys a kind of ontological priority with regards to consciousness (such that consciousness's existence is beholden to that something in a manner in which that something's existence is not beholden to consciousness), and where this ontological priority itself affords that something *causal priority* over consciousness. Certainly this does not follow merely as a matter of what we might consider as the logic of the situation, which is worth setting out. If *a* cannot possibly exist without some entirely constitutively distinct *b* existing too, it does not follow that *a* makes *b* exist. They may well necessarily coexist. Perhaps, if *a* could exist without *b*, but *b* could not exist without *a*, there is a sense in which the existence of *b* might be said to be beholden to the existence of *a* in a

¹¹⁸ Jennifer McKittrick (2006 p. 6) makes the same point with respect to Rosenberg's use of the term 'constrain'. Rosenberg (2004 pp. 151, 152) claims to be concerned not with 'causal production', how something might "in some sense come "out of" another", but with 'causal significance', where a "theory of causal significance ... will be a theory of symmetric and asymmetric *state-constraint* between individuals. But as McKittrick (2006 p. 6) points out, "to constrain something that is potentially *A* or *B* so that it becomes *B* is to cause it to become *B*". Without such a causally productive notion of constraint, Rosenberg is seemingly left with mere symmetric and asymmetric relations of necessary *coexistence*, which fail, as we shall see, to account for causation.

¹¹⁹ Though in truth, I don't see any reason to believe there are such connections.

manner that *a* is not to *b*. Yet such a possibility would in fact speak against *a*'s making *b* exist, as *a*'s existence is on this supposition perfectly compatible with *b*'s nonexistence. It might be argued that in such a case, *a* might nonetheless be said to have causal priority over *b* because of the modal facts: *b* is *counterfactually* dependent on *a* in a way that *a* is not on *b*. The closest possible world in which *a* doesn't exist is one in which *b* doesn't exist (as on this view it is logically necessary that *a* exist in order for *b* to exist), while the closest world in which *b* doesn't exist need not be one in which *a* doesn't exist. While it may be true that if such asymmetric logical coexistence relations held, they would support such counterfactuals, their being such arguably still wouldn't suffice to make them relations of *causal* priority. While Humean counterfactual accounts of causation do much violence to the ordinary folk concept, such accounts generally sustain a workable notion of causal *explanation* in the face of the Humean premise that there are no necessary connections between matters of fact. Meanwhile, those who reject the Humean premise generally do so on the grounds that the law-constituting uniform structure of the vast Humean mosaics subserving the distinctively structural causal explanations proffered by Humeans is conspicuous enough to itself demand explanation. Humeanism, in Chalmers (2012a p. 338) words, "renders our own world a cosmic coincidence world on which pervasive regularities are not explained by anything more basic than themselves". If there are aspects of reality *A* such that consciousness can't exist without *A* existing but *A* can exist without consciousness existing, *A*'s existence does nothing to explain consciousness, as whether or not consciousness also exists remains a matter of cosmic whim. Even if one rejects the foregoing claim that the relation between cause and effect is essentially explanatory, it nonetheless remains plausible that the non-Humean's sole reason for insisting upon an inscrutable form of logical necessitation is its purported explanatory value. What reason might there be for postulating asymmetric logical coexistence relations?

I have thus far focused upon non-Humean forms of causation, as consciousness is unable to feature in a structured primitive mosaic from which Humean causal relations with it might be derived. But there might be thought to be another option available for the Humean. The Humean might maintain that the fact that, if the extra-phenomenal causes of consciousness didn't exist, consciousness wouldn't exist, is a *primitive* modal fact, not subject to further analysis. It is not true in virtue of some closeness metric between our world and one exactly the same but without consciousness. This is convenient, as the closeness is generally characterised in terms of things remaining as they are in our world *prior to* the point of divergence articulated in the antecedent of the subjunctive conditional under consideration, *then* carrying on in accordance with the laws that best describe the behaviour of things in our world. I have argued that consciousness can only bear temporal relations to entities or states of affairs if such relations are constituted by its causal relations, so there would be a problem of circularity in appealing to such temporal relations in explaining the causal relations consciousness stands in. It also isn't true on account of the fact that in taking away the extra-phenomenal cause, one takes away the necessitating powers that make consciousness happen, which is equally convenient as this idea has also been refuted. Its truth has no *actual* truthmaker. Once again, it is a *primitive* modal fact. This is nonetheless a strange view to hold. It has it that counterfactual facts about what would happen if *our world* were slightly different are in no way a function of the nature of our world. Causal facts aren't settled by the nature of the actual world. Primitivism about what one might call purely modal facts, facts about the kinds of things that are possible and necessary, has at least some degree of intuitive appeal. The nature of our world has seemingly no bearing on facts about what *could* and *couldn't* be. But a similar primitivism about the foregoing kinds of counterfactuals seems positively ludicrous. How might one come to be apprised of such primitive modal facts? Certainly not by empirical investigation, as supposedly, nothing in the actual world has any

bearing upon them. Certainly not by appeal to what is conceivable or imaginable, as taking modality as *primitive* presumably entails the severing of any kind of essential connection between modal facts and conceivability facts, and even if there were such a connection, it would presumably be between conceivability and *logical* possibility and necessity, and the view under consideration is a Humean view that makes no appeal to logical necessity.

Anyone who actually believes that causal facts are settled in a manner entirely independent of actuality, given the eccentric nature of the view, has a hefty burden of proof. For this reason, I shall generally leave this possibility aside in the remaining discussion of the thesis.

10. Conclusion

Robust realists aren't in a position to invoke the metaphysical connections between experiences and the physical world that they typically invoke. Robust Realism rules out the possibility of experiences being located in a metaphysically primitive space-time manifold, be it non-phenomenally or phenomenally constituted. It also rules out those accounts of causal relations to experience that survive the extrication of experience from any such manifold, and, therefore, against a functionalist account of space-time grounded in such relations. This constitutes a substantial theoretical cost for the view.

Chapter 5

1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to establishing a thesis regarding the logic of relations I call the Relations Thesis. Informally put, it is the claim that relations relate *what things are*.

Whatever else might be involved in the pertaining of a relation between things, *what they are* is involved. In section 2, I put forward a slightly more scholastic formulation, intended to be broad enough to apply to any potential relata in any remotely plausible metaphysics that the robust realist might adopt.

In section 3, I differentiate the Relations Thesis from the Axiom of Internal Relations, the Bradleyan doctrine that Russell and Moore famously argued against. I argue that the Relations Thesis is perfectly compatible with the existence of external relations, and Russell and Moore both appear to retain a commitment to the Relations Thesis in the wake of their rejection of the Axiom of Internal Relations.

In section 4, I acknowledge that inasmuch as any potential formulation of the thesis will inevitably invoke some relation or other, there appears to be the potential for a kind of radical and systematic misunderstanding. This is a structural issue of a kind familiar in philosophical attempts to state global conditions that can apply to, among other things, representations. I then demonstrate that Sellars' logically perspicuous language, Jumblese, *shows*, through its allegorical structure, what the Relations Thesis constitutes an attempt to *say*.

In section 5, I argue for the Relations Thesis through considerations of modality. My tactic here is to start with a weak claim, contingently applying to all *actual* contingent relations between contingent things, and then build up a stronger version of the thesis by considering the further relations that arise when modalities are added to the metaphysics.

This argumentative method faces an obvious problem, as it cannot take one beyond the bounds of contingency, and cannot, therefore, establish the Relations Thesis in its full generality. In section 6, I close the remaining gap by arguing that it is plausibly the implicit assumption of the very truth of the Relations Thesis that motivates postulation of the more canonical necessarily existent objects in the first place. If this is right, then at the very least there is a presumption in favour of the positing of the full Relations Thesis in any metaphysics within which Robust Realism is to be expressed or defended.

2. The Relations Thesis

My initial informal construal of the Relations Thesis – Relations relate what things are – is likely strikes the reader as trivial. It is, which is exactly why it is a severe indictment upon a theory if it is at odds with it. But its very triviality might arouse suspicion that the principle I'll ultimately be defending and calling philosophers out for offending against moves beyond it in some significant way. Perhaps the best way to allay such suspicion is to come right out with the most metaphysically committal version of the thesis that I might wish to endorse. Here it is:

The Relations Thesis – For all relata in any relation, something that suffices for it to be the case that there are such relata must be involved in the pertaining of the relation.

The admittedly awkward 'something that suffices for it to be the case that there are such relata' formulation is adopted in aid of inclusiveness, reflecting a desire for the thesis to be broad reaching enough to transcend any particular metaphysical commitments, applying to whatever entities might make their way into any remotely plausible ontology. Were the thesis to be restricted in scope so as to apply only to relations between concrete particulars, 'something that suffices to constitute the relata' might be apt, as the constitutive nature of concrete particulars suffices for their existence. But some are committed to the existence of

things without constituents, and hence without constitutive natures, e.g. unstructured abstracta. Likewise, if the thesis were restricted in scope to relations between things that actually exist, ‘something that suffices for it to be the case that the relata *exist*’ would suffice, but Meinongians maintain that, in some sense, there *are* non-existent objects.¹²⁰

I might be said to stray slightly from the initial informal construal of my thesis with the formulation just discussed inasmuch as it might be maintained that there are things such that whatever suffices for the fact that they are isn’t *what they are*. It might be maintained, for instance, that there *are* fictional things so long as human beings engage in the practices of fiction production, consumption etc, but that neither those practices nor anything comprising them are what fictional things are. Were this the correct metaphysics of fictional objects, the truth of the Relations Thesis would still allow for relations between things the pertaining of which doesn’t involve what they are. But note that this makes the Relations Thesis *weaker* than the initial construal, not stronger. Relations between things involve what those things are *or* whatever accounts for the fact that they are. The Relations Thesis can be seen as implicating *truthmakers* for the claims that there are the relevant relata in the fact of the pertaining of any relation. The pertaining of a relation between a concrete object, a structureless universal and a Meinongian object, if there can in fact be such a relation, must involve aspects of reality accounting for the *existence* of the concrete object and the structureless universal, along with something making it *true* that there *is* such a Meinongian object.

The terms ‘must’ and ‘can’ in the Relations Thesis are intended to elevate it to the status of a conceptual cum logical claim, whatever that amounts to. It’s not just that every relation that does in fact pertain happens to be such that its pertaining involves the relevant truthmakers.

¹²⁰ For a defence of Meinongianism, see Routley (1980).

Rather, such involvement is part of what it is for a relation to pertain. The claim is intended to be stronger even than the claim that for all relations pertaining in all possible worlds their pertaining involves the relevant truthmakers, as it is meant to apply equally to relations that hold across and between such worlds. If some world is the closest possible world to ours where Mitt Romney wins the 2012 election, a relation pertains between that world and ours, and something sufficing for the existence of our world, as well as something sufficing for whatever mode of existence the relevant possible world has, will be involved in its pertaining. Likewise, if Romney's counterpart in that world is more corrupt than Romney, a relation pertains between Romney and his counterpart, and once again this involves aspects of reality sufficient for the mode of being each of the two presidential candidates has.

3. The Axiom of Internal Relations

The Relations Thesis might be thought to look dangerously similar to the infamous 'axiom of internal relations' criticised by Russell and Moore. Such a thought, though mistaken, wouldn't be entirely unjustified, as superficially speaking, there *is* a resemblance. Consider the following characterisation of the axiom by Russell (1994 p. 139):

'Every relation is grounded in the natures of the related terms.' Let us call this the *axiom of internal relations*. If this axiom holds, the fact that two objects have a certain relation implies complexity in each of the two objects, i.e. it implies something in the 'natures' of the two objects, in virtue of which they have the relation in question.

Much of this description of the axiom could be taken to communicate what I wish to communicate with the Relations Thesis. There is a sense in which I think it trivially true that "every relation is grounded in the natures of the related terms" and that there is "something in the 'natures' of the [related] objects, in virtue of which they have the relation in question" (Russell 1994 p. 139). But taken in the sense in which I would take them to be true, such

claims are in no way incompatible with the position Russell (1994 p. 139) directly contrasts with that which he takes the axiom to express:

According to the opposite view, which is the one that I advocate, there are such facts as that one object has a certain relation to another, and such facts cannot in general be reduced to, or inferred from, a fact about the one object only together with a fact about the other object only: they do not imply that the two objects have any complexity, or any *intrinsic* property distinguishing them from two objects which do not have the relation in question.

The position Russell advocates is only at odds with the view that every relation is grounded *solely* in the natures of the related terms, that there is something in the natures of the objects *solely* in virtue of which they have the relation in question, the view that every relation is ‘intrinsic to its relata’, to appropriate Lewis’s (1999 p. 26) terminology. I definitely don’t think it trivial that relations are intrinsic to their relata. In fact, like Russell, I think it mistaken. I merely think there is a trivial sense in which every relation is *at least partially grounded* in the natures of the related terms, for concrete particulars, their nature *qua* concrete particulars, for property instances, their nature *qua* property instances, for properties *qua* universals, their nature *qua* universals, for non-existents, their nature *qua* non-existents, and so on, and I take what suffices for it to be the case that there are such terms to be determinative of the requisite natures. On this score, Russell appears to be in complete agreement with me. Shortly after having given the axiom of internal relations short shrift, he claims that a judgement “that two terms have a certain relation” is true inasmuch as there is a corresponding “complex object” which “*consists* of the two terms related by the relation” (Russell 1994 p. 158 emphasis mine). In speaking of the related *terms*, he clearly means the related things themselves, so the truth-making object he speaks of consists of *them*, what they are, or, in the least, their natures in the foregoing sense. Their natures partially or wholly ground the relation by partially or wholly comprising that object.

Might this be the kind of grounding relation that Moore (1922 p. 309) is speaking of when he issues the following comments at the end of his famous rebuttal of the axiom?

Yet it is worth noting, I think, that there is another sense of “grounded” in which it may quite well be true that every relational property *is* grounded in the nature of any term which possesses it. Namely that, in the case of every such property, the term in question has some quality *without* which it could not have had the property. In other words that the relational property *entails* some quality in the term, though no quality in the term *entails* the relational property.

It might be argued that my grounding requirement is more basic. It is not that possession of a relational property requires that a thing have some quality or other, it is that it requires *that very thing*, or its nature in the foregoing sense. To attribute a property to something, relational or otherwise, might not be tantamount to positing it *qua* existent, as Kant (2007 pp. 504, 505) famously claimed, but it is nonetheless the positing of it *qua* whatever kind of thing it is. Having said this, I think it reasonably obvious that my grounding requirement is entailed by Moore’s. The quoted passage appears shortly after Moore (1951 p. 308) has drawn a distinction between a thing’s *qualities* and its *relational properties*. For something to have a quality, taken in Moore’s sense, is presumably for an aspect of reality making for the instantiating of such a quality to be an inherent part of an aspect of reality making for the being of that something. If the aspect of reality making for the instantiating of the quality, taken alone or in conjunction with other aspects of reality, *doesn’t* make for the being of that something, then they surely can’t be said to be qualities of *it*. In saying this, I have weighed in on a metaphysical debate. I have assumed that there is no real distinction between a thing and what Moore calls its qualities. To quote Galen Strawson (2006b p. 207), “‘Inherence in a substance’ is ... a dummy phrase used simply to express the fact that the properties or attributes in question are concretely instantiated (‘exist’)”. It might instead be maintained that quality possession is a matter of an *instantiation relation* pertaining between a quality *qua*

universal and a thing *qua* bare particular. In such a case, Moore's grounding requirement arguably doesn't entail mine, as the possibility of such an instantiation relation pertaining without implicating what makes for the being of the quality instantiated or the thing instantiating it hasn't been ruled out (that's what my grounding requirement does). I do not think the truth of the Relations Thesis in any way beholden to the truth of either account of quality possession; if the latter account is correct, then I think the Relations Thesis true of all relations including instantiation relations between universals and bare particulars. I could just as easily take the metaphysically inclusive high road here as well, but I think it worth noting that inasmuch as I am assuming Robust Realism regarding qualia in this thesis, I am assuming the truth of the former account. In experience we encounter categorical phenomenal property *instances*, not some nexus between phenomenal properties *qua* universals and the bare particular that is the experience possessing them. It's difficult to imagine why anyone whose metaphysics allowed for a non-relational property-instance-based account of quality possession in some cases might revert to a relational universal-and-bare-particular-based account at some other point.

Whether or not Moore is tacitly endorsing the Relations Thesis in the passage cited above, the asymmetry of entailment he appeals to is the crucial factor in distinguishing that thesis from the axiom of internal relations. Involvement is not a symmetric notion; taking a bath involves getting wet, but getting wet needn't involve taking a bath. Likewise, that the pertaining of a relation necessarily involves what suffices for it to be the case that each of its relata exist, subsist, or whatever, doesn't in any way imply that what thus suffices necessarily involves the pertaining of that relation. The claim that what thus suffices for the relata does in fact necessarily involve the pertaining of the relation is a more accurate rendering of the axiom of internal relations than that provided above by Russell. Moore characterises the axiom thusly: "in the case of every relational property, it can always be truly asserted of any

term A which has that property, that any term which had not had it would necessarily have been different from A". In case the difference isn't immediately clear, Russell characterises the axiom as the claim that all relations are intrinsic to their relata taken *collectively*, Moore as the claim that all relations are intrinsic to their relata taken *individually*. On this characterisation, every relation a thing has might be described as essential to and constitutive of its nature, taken in the foregoing sense. My piano's maintaining whatever distance from the moon it does is something to which it owes its being, as anything not that distance from the moon would not be my piano.

Like Moore, and most philosophers that followed him, I think this view mistaken. Anything not the same distance from the moon as my piano *is* not my piano, as my piano, as a *matter of fact*, is that distance from the moon. But to say that anything not that distance from the moon *wouldn't* be my piano is an altogether different claim, a false one. Countless possible situations in which that distance relation is tinkered with leave my piano intact. In contrast, all situations bereft of appropriate counterparts to the localised intrinsic spatiotemporal components of my piano are situations in which my piano doesn't exist. The Relations Thesis only claims that a constitutively sufficient set of those spatiotemporal components must be involved in the pertaining of any relation with my piano, not *absolutely everything*. That absolutely everything is thus involved is plausibly entailed by the axiom, as everything bears some relation or other to everything else, and, according to the axiom, owes its being to doing so, though it admittedly only follows that absolutely everything is therefore *involved* if the Relations Thesis holds as well. I think it likely that most advocates of the axiom would also have subscribed to the Relations Thesis, if only because it is intuitively highly plausible and I've found *explicit* rejection of it nowhere.¹²¹ But the Relations Thesis is equally compatible

¹²¹ In Bradley's case, a better reason would be that the intuition that relations must implicate their relata is arguably the engine of his infamous regress.

with rejection of the axiom, and taken in combination with such rejection it preserves the intuitive asymmetry of the part-whole relation. Absolutely everything owes its existence to every little thing, but every little thing doesn't owe its existence to absolutely everything. As Moore (1922 pp. 288-289) pointed out, the axiom nullifies this intuitive asymmetry, as it arguably would the intuitive non-symmetry of *involvement*, taken in its most general sense. If the axiom were true, A's involving B would be a relational fact belonging to B's very nature. B's nature would involve A's involvement with it, plausibly thereby involving A itself (though once again, the plausibility of A's involvement with B involving A itself is something I'm yet to argue for).

4. A Communicability Issue

Enough has been said regarding the axiom of internal relations. At this point I wish instead to draw attention to a problem concerning the very communicability of the Relations Thesis. As should be clear from the last sentence of the previous section, involvement itself is a non-symmetric *relation*. The Relations Thesis appeals to this particular non-symmetric relation in order to make the universal claim about all relations I wish to make, but other non-symmetric relations would have done just as well. My initial informal construal simply had it that relations *relate* what their relata are. Elsewhere, I have spoken of relations *implicating* their relata and of relata *grounding* the pertaining of relations. I have also taken Russell's claim that relational claims are made true by a corresponding complex object which, among other things, *consists* of the relevant relata, as tacit endorsement of the Relations Thesis. If I might avail myself of the language of facts without this being taken as indicative of a commitment to the existence of facts *qua* semantic abstracta, I'd also be just as happy to construe my thesis in terms of *supervenience*:

The Relational Facts Supervenience Thesis – All relational facts necessarily supervene either solely upon facts sufficing for it to be the case that there are the relata those relational facts relate, or upon such facts in combination with other facts.

But inasmuch as I invoke any such relations in formulating my theses I might be said to fall short of communicating what I wish to communicate, as it is not my intention to highlight an entailment between all relations and some particular relation, involvement, supervenience or whatever, but rather, to highlight a fact about the structure of relations themselves. The Relations Thesis says an involvement relation necessarily pertains between the pertaining of any relation and stuff that accounts for the being, subsistence, or whatever of its relata. It might be thought possible for someone to agree that this is so but miss the point entirely, thinking the pertaining of the involvement relation *itself* doesn't implicate *its* relata in the manner I intend to claim all relations do. It involves them, as this is supposedly the case with regards to the pertaining of any relation whatsoever, but the relation of involvement itself isn't relata implicating. Obviously, it won't do to make a further clause that involvement implicates its relata, as *implication* is but another relation the pertaining of which might be thought not to incorporate its relata in the manner I intend to convey. The same goes for supervenience. The supervenience relation which the Relational Facts Supervenience Thesis claims holds between all relational facts and the sufficiency facts it cites might be thought not to involve, implicate, incorporate etc, both the relational fact and the sufficiency facts. Every attempted ostension towards features intrinsic to relation instances might instead be taken as saying all such instances possess some incomprehensibly wholly extrinsic relational property.

Having said all this, I think it highly unlikely that any of the foregoing formulations have induced any such Bradleyan vertigo. I'm sure every construal of the thesis has been taken in the manner intended. I am sure of this because I think nobody so forlorn a thinker as to think relational facts are thus disunified. It is nonetheless noteworthy that were it the case that

someone conceived of relations as being other than how I intend the above theses to say they are, there is every chance that no attempted formulation of my thesis would suffice to communicate what I intend to that person. I might do well to abandon language in favour of some non-discursive form of demonstration, say, hitting him or her with a stick like a Zen master. Perhaps I might thereby show what I cannot say.

There is in fact a case to be made to the effect that the purported communicability issue under discussion hinges upon a distinction between saying and showing. Regarding the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, Sellars (1962 p. 12) writes, “If one so uses the term ‘ineffable’ that to eff something is to signify it by using a name, then Wittgenstein’s view would be that what are ordinarily called relations are ineffable”. Claims which, due to our ordinary language’s lack of grammatical perspicuity, purport to *mention* them merely “call attention to those features of discourse about what is or is not the case in the world which ‘show themselves’, i.e. are present in a perspicuous language not as words, but in the manner in which words are combined” (Sellars 1962 p. 9). In Sellars’s perspicuous language, Jumblese, to represent that n objects satisfy an n -adic concept, for any $n > 1$, one simply concatenates their names somehow, without invoking any further signs. To represent that a single object satisfies a monadic concept, one writes the name for that object in some particular style, colour or font. The claims ‘ a is higher than b ’, ‘ a is fat’, ‘ a is between b and c ’ and ‘ a is leaning’ might be respectively expressed as follows:

$\overset{a}{b}$ **a** bac *a*

Jumblese’s perspicuity is born of its allegorical structure – with the objects as with their names – and it implicitly shows by way of that structure what I explicitly say with the above theses.

5. Modal Considerations

Assuming the Relations Thesis understood, what might be said in its favour other than that it seems obvious to the point of being trivial? To begin with, I'd like to make the case for the plausibility of the following restricted version of the Relations Thesis:

The Contingently Existing Actual Relations Thesis – The pertaining of any contingently existing actual¹²² relation between contingently existing actual things involves¹²³ aspects of reality sufficient for the being of each related thing.

The plausibility of this claim can be brought into view by considering the closest possible situation to the actual situation in which some such relation pertains that lacks counterparts for whatever makes for the actual existence of one of the relata, i.e. a situation identical except that one of the relata doesn't exist. I am less than five meters from my piano at present. Plausibly, the closest possible situation to the actual situation that makes this so and that lacks my piano is one qualitatively identical in all respects but that it lacks counterparts for the constituents of my piano. My counterpart in that situation most definitely wouldn't be five meters from his piano. He might be five meters from some Meinongian non-existent piano, but that is a relation of an altogether different kind. At present, I am only concerned with relations the pertaining of which might be said to supervene solely upon contingent actuality. There are many such relations, infinitely many perhaps, and in every case, simple modal considerations of the foregoing kind suffice to demonstrate the role the being of their relata plays in their pertaining. The closest situation to any actual situation in which such a relation pertains that lacks a counterpart for one of the actual relata is a situation in which the

¹²² The intended contrast class for 'actual' is 'possible'. What actually exists is what categorically exists in the world, i.e. universe, in which we exist. This usage originates with Lewis (1970 pp. 184, 185).

¹²³ Note the lack of a logical 'must'.

relation doesn't pertain. This is surely testament to the difference making power of the being of the relata.

Working outwards from this result, consider a theory of fictional objects according to which the being of actual fictional objects, the objects of the contingently existing fictional lore of the actual world, is sustained *solely* by the contingent being of that fictional lore. Given such a theory, the same means of demonstration could be used to show that contingently existing actual relations between actual fictional objects and contingently existing actual objects, or other actual fictional objects for that matter, always implicate what makes for the being of each relata. It is contingently the case that John Lennon did less detective work than Sherlock Holmes. That such an asymmetric relation pertains between Lennon and Holmes is true, assuming the foregoing theory, solely on account of how contingent actuality is. Presumably, in a world with identical fictional lore about Holmes but in which Lennon's counterpart does more detective work than is attributed to Holmes in that lore, or one where Lennon remain the same but the counterpart lore about Holmes has it that he never managed to secure a case, this is not so. Given such an account of actual fictional objects, the same modal considerations as above suffice to demonstrate that what makes for the being of Lennon and Holmes is involved in the pertaining of the relation. Note that the fictional nature of actual fictional objects isn't doing any special work here. The result clearly generalises so as to apply to things of any kind so long as their being is *solely* sustained by aspects of contingent actuality. Assuming an actualist constructivism about propositions, according to which the being of propositions is sustained by the contingencies of actual linguistic practices, or an actualist constructivism regarding numbers, according to which the being of numbers is sustained by the contingencies of actual mathematical practices, or perhaps even an actualist Meinongianism, according to which facts about non-existent objects are sustained by the

contingencies of naturalised and nominalistic intentional facts, the same would be true of contingent actual relations between and with them.

Moving further outwards again, the same counterfactual considerations suffice to show that all *non-actual* contingent relations between *non-actual* contingent existents, fictions, constructively-sustained-abstracta etc, non-necessary relations between non-necessary existents, fictions, constructively-sustained-abstracta etc in merely possible worlds, are such that their pertaining involves what makes for the being of their relata. One merely need consider the closest possible situations to the possible situation in which any such relation pertains bereft of counterparts for what makes for the being of any one of its relata. In every such case, the relation will not pertain. The upshot of all this is that in every possible world, all contingent relations between contingent existents, fictions, constructively-sustained-abstracta etc involve what makes for the being of their relata, and if something is true in all possible worlds, it is necessary. We have regained our logical ‘must’, thereby establishing the following thesis:

The Contingent Relations Between Contingents Thesis – All contingent relations between contingent things of any kind *must* involve something sufficient for it to be the case there are such things.

6. Special Philosophers Objects

The problem now becomes that of moving further outwards, beyond the bounds of contingency, so as to take in all those other objects metaphysicians are wont to postulate, objects purported to somehow transcend the play of contingent matters of fact, objects purported to be *necessarily existent*. Most philosophers don’t subscribe to the actualist psychologism about numbers mentioned previously. On the contrary, many think mathematical truths transcend not only the contingencies of human mathematical practices,

but contingency writ large, being made true by a mathematical reality that likewise transcends contingency writ large (Benacerraf & Putnam 1983 pp. 18, 19, 261). Many also maintain that to think is to entertain one of an infinite number of *propositions* the existence of which also transcends contingency writ large (Loux 2006 p. 126). A select number go so far as to maintain that all illogical objects such as round squares have some peculiar mode of being that likewise transcends contingency writ large (Nolan 2013 pp. 369, 370). The necessary existence of such objects, or, in the case of the aforementioned illogical objects, the necessity of their having whatever mode of being they are meant to have, rules against the possibility of extending the same method of demonstration used previously. This method involved an appeal to the possibility of the non-being of one of the relata in some relational fact in order to show difference making power of the aspects of reality making for the being, subsistence, or whatever, of that relata. We have no such possibilities to appeal to in this case, as the non-being of a necessarily existent object is an out-and-out *impossibility*. A different means of demonstration will be required if we are to reach out into the domain of the necessarily existent.

I think there is a way forward here. It involves an appeal to the motivations for postulating the being of such objects. Why do philosophers postulate universals? Because different things can have *something* in common. But why must that something exist? Well, because if it doesn't exist, it can't be what they have in common. Why not? Well, to *be* a feature of something, something must *be*. Why? Why must a universal exist in order for a particular to instantiate it? At this point, an appropriate response would likely give voice to the intuition the Relations Thesis intends to give voice to. For something to instantiate something, the thing it instantiates must exist. Obviously, this claim lacks the generality of the Relations Thesis, being specifically concerned with the relation of instantiation, rather than relations in general, but the intuition that it is so is unlikely to be based on some special knowledge of the

purported instantiation relation, as that is shrouded in mystery. Rather, it is likely to be based on the intuition that a thing can no more instantiate something else without that something else than it can scrub, love, be taller than or distance itself from something else without that something else.

Were it considered possible for particulars to actually instantiate universals without there being universals, for thoughts and linguistic acts to actually express propositions without there being propositions, for thoughts to actually be directed towards illogical objects without there being illogical objects, surely there would be countless philosophers saying we can have it all, so to speak, at no ontological cost. Nominalist reconstruction of abstracta talk is, after all, a thankless task of questionable success. Likewise, if intentional relations to non-existent objects could be had without it being the case that there were such objects, why would anyone contend with the difficulties that beset Meinongian metaphysics. That there aren't countless philosophers saying such things is suggestive of an implicit commitment to the claim that any relation's being borne to a thing requires that very thing. Such objects are among Philosophy's more controversial creations. Whenever they are postulated, it is because they are thought to do some kind of theoretical work, featuring somehow in explanations of more mundanely familiar phenomena, not just to idle away in their own intrinsic glory.¹²⁴ The purportedly explanatory *relation* they are said to bear to mundane reality prompts their postulation, and it need not do so unless the Relations Thesis is true.

7. Conclusion

The Relations Thesis plausibly articulates a logical truth about the nature of relations. For all relata in any relation, something that suffices for it to be the case that there are such relata must be involved in the pertaining of the relation.

¹²⁴ God might be an exception here.

Chapter 6

1. Introduction

This chapter examines another aspect of the Robust Realist program, the nexus between experience and representation. In section 2, I discuss the entailment and exclusion relations that hold between key tenets of the Phenomenal Intentionality Research Program (PIRP) and various views premised upon an external-relation-based characterisation of acquaintance. This motivates a critical evaluation of PIRP's central tenet, the claim that experiences possess real intentionality *qua* experienced.

In section 3, I present a basic argument against the claim that the intrinsic constitution of experiences can suffice for the pertaining of straightforward aboutness relations between those experiences and things belonging to a constitutively extrinsic reality. This is intended to demonstrate the challenge the Relations Thesis presents to phenomenally grounded intentionality. Phenomenal intentionality isn't generally characterised in terms of primitive aboutness relations, but rather, in terms of narrow non-object-involving content, with narrow contents typically characterised as semantic abstracta.

After some scene-setting in section 4, in section 5 I then argue that if abstract objects aren't constitutively identical to phenomenally revealed property instances, the Relations Thesis is inconsistent with the claim that relations to abstract objects are phenomenally revealed. In section 6, I then argue that such contents cannot be nominalistically reduced to anything that might be experientially given.

In section 7, I address the two major objections to the foregoing arguments. One is an objection deriving from the experiential phenomenon of experiencing things *as* instances of objective types. I contend that the objection rests upon a familiar fallacy of phenomenological

description that can be remedied by attending to such phenomenology. The second is an objection made by David Chalmers, premised upon our supposed knowledge of the kinds of things we are capable of representing. In reply, I argue that an appeal to such knowledge would be question begging in this context.

In the final three sections of the chapter I then consider Robust Realism in relation to the claim that experiences possess real intentionality *qua* experienced. In section 8, I present my reasons for rejecting this claim, and in section 9 I use this result to argue that if robust realists are to save the representational relations between phenomenal states and phenomenal judgements that their position is premised upon, they must endorse an external-relation-based account of acquaintance. In section 10, I then use the conclusions of chapter 4 with respect to spatial and causal connectedness to highlight the difficulty of accounting for the unmediated acquaintance relation such a view postulates. I consider and reject three other candidate relation types the robust realist might seek recourse in: phenomenal relations (section 10.1), shared phenomenal content relations (section 10.2) and comparative relations (section 10.3). I conclude, as a result of the survey undertaken in the chapter, that the costs incurred by the robust realist in explaining intentionality put the view into serious question.

2. Three Key Theses: PI, OI and AM

In the introduction of his recent edited volume entitled *Phenomenal Intentionality*, Uriah Kriegel (2013 p. 2) speaks of a newly emergent research program, the Phenomenal Intentionality Research Program, or PIRP, that is premised upon the idea that there is a kind of “intentionality a mental state has purely in virtue of its phenomenal character”. To say that mental states are possessed of intentionality *purely* in virtue of their phenomenal character would suggest that such intentionality is something their phenomenal character has *qua* experienced. The ink formations on this page are identical to sentence tokens, but not *qua* ink

formations. Rather, they are identical to sentence tokens *qua* participants in a Wittgensteinian ‘form of life’ or some such. Advocates of PIRP, PIRPers herein, take such intentionality to be an *experientially given* aspect of phenomenal states, on par with their supposed intrinsicity, unity, dynamism and so forth. In short, it would seem that PIRPers endorse the following claim:

Phenomenal Intentionality (PI) – Experiences admit of intentionality, *real* intentionality (a qualification I’ll explain shortly), in virtue of their being experienced.¹²⁵

In Chapter 1, I briefly discussed how there is a push among contemporary phenomenal realists to reverse the damage done to the notion of phenomenology by their forebears, most notably with respect to the elimination of those aspects of phenomenology one would be intuitively inclined to refer to as cognitive, conceptual, intentional and such. Once the existence of such phenomenology is acknowledged, as it plausibly must be if one is to abide by robust realist scruples, the emergence of questions regarding the contribution, if any, such phenomenology might make to actual *bona fide* conception, intentionality and such is almost inevitable. PI is one possible answer to the question of the relation between intentional phenomenology and actual intentionality, i.e. that phenomenal intentionality is a species of actual objective intentionality.

Given that PI attributes such intentionality to experiences *qua* experienced, their possession of it must be secured by their experienced nature alone, at least so long as we are assuming Robust Realism, which affords their experienced nature no further extra-experiential constituents. Such intentionality must therefore be *underived*, owing its existence to no

¹²⁵ Not all proponents of phenomenal intentionality endorse PI. Strawson (2010 pp. 342-344), for instance, is sure to make clear that he doesn’t take what he calls “cognitive EQ (experiential qualitative) content” to be genuine cognitive content. For Strawson (2010 pp. 343-346), cognitive EQ content only comprises a “sense” or “conception” in virtue of its manner of participation in a wider economy, not simply in virtue of its being experienced. Proponents of PI include McGinn (1997 pp. 300-303), Kriegel (2003 p. 288) and Chalmers (2010 pp. 398, 436; 2012b pp. 6, 7).

further facts, intentionality-laden or otherwise. Not only do PIRPers maintain that the intentionality attributed by PI is underived, they think it is the *sole* form of underived intentionality, so they also subscribe to the following thesis:

Original Intentionality (OI) – For all forms of intentionality that *aren't* the kind of experienced intentionality PI speaks of, it is only by virtue of some relation they bear to actual or possible instances of intentionality that *are* of the kind PI speaks of that they are forms of intentionality at all.

It is this further commitment to OI that allows PIRP to constitute a research program. Kriegel (2013 p. 1) contrasts PIRP with the 'Naturalist-Externalist Research Program', or NERP, which has been the predominant research program dedicated to the understanding of intentionality since the late seventies. These two research programs are dedicated to exploring two different prospective means by which intentionality might be "injected into the world", two different prospective sources of *original intentionality* (Kriegel 2013 pp. 2, 3). NERPers think "intentionality makes its first appearance on the scene" when certain "tracking relations" hold between physical states of organisms, more often than not, their brain states, and states of their wider environment (Kriegel 2013 p. 2). PIRPers, in contrast, think the experientially given intentionality PI testifies to is the sole form of original intentionality on which all other forms of intentionality are parasitic. Kriegel (2013 p. 3) writes, "once this phenomenal character appears, and brings in its train "original intentionality," intentionality can be "passed around" to things lacking this (or any) phenomenal character".

Regarding prospective means of justifying PI, Kriegel (2013 p. 7) writes, "One consideration unlikely to win converts but central in motivating sympathizers is the idea that phenomenal intentionality is simply *introspectively manifest*: attending to one's stream of consciousness in the right way brings out that some conscious episodes are intentional". For anyone aware

aware of Kriegel's commitments, this will seem an affirmation of PI premised upon phenomenological acquaintance with the aspects of *experience* that supposedly make PI true. But 'introspection' means different things to different philosophers. Some philosophers use it to refer to events occurring *within* phenomenology, *the phenomenon of introspection*, while others take it to be an operation performed on, or with respect to, experience, by a mind that is somehow *acquainted* with experience without being a constitutive part of it, the *introspection of phenomena*. To explain the project of "rational reconstruction" undertaken in the *Aufbau*, Carnap (1967 § 101) offers a fictitious account of a subject who "during the first part of his life, merely absorbs the given, without working upon it, and then, in the second part of his life, synthesizes the retained material ... without absorbing, during this part of his life, any more of the given". Inasmuch as the subject's operations on the given aren't themselves given, the relationship between cognising subject and the phenomenal in this fiction is in fact an apt caricaturing of the way this relationship is actually characterised in much classical empiricist philosophy.¹²⁶ It should nonetheless be noted that classical empiricists characterized acquaintance as an *immediate* relation, one capable of underwriting the kind of non-inferential knowledge of phenomenal states Robust Realism demands. The opaque, topic-neutral and mediated conception of the mind-experience relationship, whether or not it does in fact find its origins in Kant, doesn't really take hold until the mid twentieth century. It would therefore appear that many classical empiricists at least tacitly assumed the following thesis regarding the relationship between cognition and experience:

¹²⁶ The only difference between this fiction and Carnap's actual view, for instance, is that in the fiction it is as if the cognising subject's operations also stand apart from the given *temporally*, somehow presiding over the entire objective-time-ordered array of experiences comprising his early life, rather than being locked inside this ordering themselves.

Acquainted Mind (AM) – Acquaintance, the relation underwriting our non-inferential knowledge of phenomenal properties, is an immediate relation between experiences and a constitutively separate intellect.

Many PIRPers are likely to see themselves as reversing the damage born of the historical influence of AM. They would likely blame its strict delineation of the cognitive and the phenomenal for the caricatured accounts of phenomenology that came to hold sway among classical empiricists. But there is a risk of overstating the tension between PIRP and AM. PI and OI don't rule out the possibility of further non-phenomenal mental states that interface in some way with experience. Rather they stipulate that *if* there is a mind extrinsic to phenomenology that introspects phenomenology from without, that mind owes the very intentionality that makes it a mind to the experiences it thus introspects. This is exactly the opposite view to that held by those classical empiricists who characterized the visual field as a meaningless array of colour qualia that the acquainted intellect, in time, came to 'take' as signifying features in the external world (much as the competent English speaker, acquainted, in a less scholastic sense, with certain ink formations, takes them as signifying various properties, things, states of affairs and such). It is exactly this kind of derivative relation that Siewert (1998 p. 191) is speaking against when he insists that a possessor of the kind of *original* intentionality under discussion not have it by virtue of something else that '*supplies it with an interpretation*'.¹²⁷ But the fact that classical empiricists held AM in conjunction with the denial of OI doesn't render it compulsory to do so. PIRP is perfectly compatible with

¹²⁷ There is, of course, a sense in which the ink formations on this page need not be supplied with a further interpretation, when encountered by an English speaker, in order to mean what they mean. A competent speaker need not avail him or herself with any kind of interpretative cipher to extract meaning from this page. This is *not* what Siewert means: "My making a certain utterance by itself is not an intentional feature – for there must also obtain some condition that, as we might say, *supplies it with an interpretation*" (Siewert 1998 p. 191). The condition, in such a case, is that of there being agents who, by virtue of their having minds that are already somehow possessed of intentionality, have conferred the status of being a sign upon the utterance. Likewise, PIRPers reject any account of the intentionality of experiences that has it that an introspecting mind, already possessed of intentionality confers intentionality upon them. They endorse OI, the opposite thesis.

a *deflationary* version of AM, one which has it that there is a non-phenomenal mind that is both immediately acquainted with, and derives its intentionality from, phenomenology.

There is likewise some risk of wrongly assuming an essential connection between PIRP and Robust Realism. Consider first a more ‘inflationist’ version of AM, which has it that the acquainted mind’s activity constitutes intentionality-laden intellection in a manner altogether independent of experience. Such a view would constitute the rejection of OI, and, therefore, a rejection of PIRP, but it would do no violence to phenomenology. Experiences might *also* possess original intentionality.

It might nonetheless be thought that one can only adopt a ‘fully inflated’ version of AM, which also rejects PI, by deflating phenomenology in some way or other. But even this isn’t clear. Inasmuch as experiences genuinely do appear to admit of aspects one would be intuitively inclined to refer to as cognitive, conceptual or intentional, any phenomenal realist wishing to stay off Dennett’s slippery slope is compelled to concede the existence of such phenomenology *qua* phenomenology. But the further tendency among the philosophers reintroducing such phenomenology to take it to be, not just the appearance of thought, conception, intentionality and the like, but genuine thought, conception and intentionality, doesn’t seem likewise compulsory. Perhaps the various forms of phenomenology simply aren’t the objective phenomena they might be said to constitute appearances of. Perhaps they are merely shadows cast by the genuinely conceptual and intentionality laden activity that a phenomenology extrinsic mind constitutes. The sense in which the robust realist is committed to phenomenal properties being exactly as they appear is restricted to how they phenomenally reveal themselves, not what they phenomenally reveal themselves *as*. Experiences aren’t experienced *as* experiences. Robust Realism nonetheless has it that they are experiences. In contrast, they are experienced *as* being embedded within a world, but if the arguments in Chapter 4 are sound, they aren’t.

But PIRPers take objective intentionality to be an experientially given property of experiences, much like their intrinsicality or unity. If they're right, experiences themselves speak against the possibility of their being mere appearances of intentionality. Indeed, to speak of experiences being experienced *as* being conceptual, intentional and the like might even be taken to concede the very point at issue. There is at least some *prima facie* plausibility in the suggestion that if appearances are experienced *as* anything at all, they are genuinely conceptual, as their being experienced *as* things is one and the same as their being experienced to come under concepts, and their being intentionally contentful might plausibly be thought to be entailed by their being thus conceptually inflected. If experiences really do betray objective intentionality *qua* experienced, the robust realist is forced to accept as much. Given that my primary objective is that of getting clear on the implications of Robust Realism, this suggests an obvious way forward for this project. We first address ourselves to PI, both to its *phenomenological* adequacy and the degree to which it is *logically* compatible with central tenets of Robust Realism, only concerning ourselves with the fully inflated reading of AM if it proves problematic. I will argue that it does prove problematic. In fact, I will be arguing that both PI *and* AM are untenable, and that this renders the real representation Robust Realism is premised upon untenable.

3. 'Real' Aboutness and the Relations Thesis

The idea that experiences are possessed of an intrinsic intentionality was discussed briefly in Chapter 1. There I made a distinction between the *phenomenon of aboutness* and the *aboutness of phenomena*. The phenomenon of aboutness is something the robust realists cannot plausibly deny. Thought phenomenology has a pseudo-relational character whereby it 'connotes' relations it doesn't in fact embody. But the representation that PIRPers attribute to experience isn't mere pseudo-representation, but rather, *real* representation, something more like the aboutness of phenomena. To straightforwardly characterize it that way would be to

make straw men of most, if not all PIRPers. Nonetheless, there is a useful toy example here by means of which one can get a basic sense of the problematic. Consider the view that the intrinsic constitution of experiences alone suffices for it to be the case that experiences are straightforwardly *about* altogether constitutively separate things in the external world.

It should be relatively obvious that this contradicts the Relations Thesis. Claims to the effect that things are about other thing are *relational* claims, and in a situation where such constitutive independence pertains between the two relata of such a relation, the relation can't pertain solely on account of the constitutive nature of one of them. Were proponents of the view that experiences, *qua* experiences, have real representational properties to characterize such properties as aboutness relations to extrinsic things, they would face an argument along the following lines:

- P1) For all things x and all relations R , if x is one of the relata of R , then something that suffices for the existence_m of x must be involved in the pertaining of R .
- P2) For any phenomenal state s and any other thing y , if y is constitutively extrinsic to s , then the existence of s 's experienced nature, or any part thereof, doesn't suffice for the existence_m of y .
- C1) For all things x , all relations R , and any phenomenal state s , if x is one of the relata of R , then x is constitutively extrinsic to s only if something that isn't s 's experienced nature, or any part thereof, is involved in the pertaining of R .
- P3) For all phenomenal states s and relations R , s can constitute the phenomenal revelation of R only if everything involved in the pertaining of R is s 's experienced nature or a part thereof.
- P4) For any relation R of the form ' y is about z ', y and z are relata of R .

- C2) For any relation R of the form ‘ y is about z ’, if y is a phenomenal state and z is something constitutively extrinsic to y , y cannot constitute the phenomenal revelation of R .

A thing’s ‘existence_m’ is simply its existence so long as it does in fact exist. In the case of a Meinongian object, its existence_m is something minimally sufficient for it to be the case that there is such an object (hence the ‘m’ subscript). P1 in this argument is the Relations Thesis. As for P2, Robust Realism has it that the experienced nature of any phenomenal state is identical to its constitutive nature. If one substitutes ‘constitutive nature’ for ‘experienced nature’, P2 plausibly articulates a conceptual truth, what it *means* for something to be constitutively extrinsic to something else. P3 returns us to the considerations of Chapter 3. The pertaining of a relation is the *existence* of that relation, and something’s existence is only phenomenally revealed inasmuch as something *sufficient* for its existence is phenomenally revealed. P4 is arguably a trivial definitional truth. On the assumption of Robust Realism, the argument seems both valid and sound, and its conclusion denies that the intrinsic constitution of experiences can suffice for the pertaining of straightforward aboutness relations between those experiences and things belonging to a constitutively extrinsic reality.

This is the challenge for PIRPers. Intentionality is generally characterised in terms of relations of aboutness, directedness and such. Kriegel (2013 p. 17) characterizes the problem of identifying “the kind of phenomenal character whose appearance injects intentionality into the world” as that of identifying “the phenomenal signature of directedness”. He even goes so far as to suggest that phenomenal directedness might be a “*sui generis* phenomenal feature” (Kriegel 2013 p. 18). For such talk not to be in violation of the Relations Thesis, one would assume that it must be either a merely experience-internal relation between experience-internal aspects, in which case it plausibly doesn’t pertain to the ‘real’ world in the desired manner, or an aspect of experience *qua* participant in ‘wider’ facts, in which case it’s not an

aspect of experience *qua* experienced, or a mere phenomeno-notional pseudo-relation, which likewise doesn't pertain to the 'real' world in the desired manner. PIRPers seemingly think there's another option here, a kind of directedness pertaining to experience that isn't a straightforward instantiation of a two place relation between experience and what it is directed at, but that isn't merely the instantiation of a phenomenal property that phenomeno-notionally 'connotes' a kind of relatedness that isn't in fact instantiated. The phenomenal appearance of world-representation is, at the same time, the world-representation of phenomenal appearance. Somehow, experiences manage to intrinsically achieve some kind of purchase on extrinsic reality. How might this be done?

4. Narrow Contents

To be clear, no proponent of PIRP endorses the view that experiences represent extrinsic reality in the crude form I have outlined – that is, by instantiating a primitive aboutness relation to constitutively extrinsic things. Firstly, there is general acknowledgement of the fact that Russellian representation – 'wide', "object-involving" representation – can't be secured solely by virtue of the phenomenal nature of experience (Chalmers 2010 p. 356). Rejection of this possibility is presumably premised upon tacit acknowledgement of something akin to the Relations Thesis. There is another, equally good, reason not to characterize phenomenal representation in terms of the straightforward instantiation of aboutness relations. Regarding the shape an account of the representational nature of sensory experiences might take, Siewert (1998 p. 242) writes:

However such a theory is worked out, it obviously has to allow somehow that one may have a sensory experience of some sort even when it is not linked to the fulfillment of its condition of accuracy *in that instance*. For if we said, for example, that its looking to me as if there is something X-shaped there is neither accurate nor inaccurate, unless it is caused by there being something X-shaped there, then we have the problem that it can never inaccurately

look to me as if there is something X-shaped. And so if we made this tight an environmental link prerequisite for sensory intentionality, we would make inaccurate sensory appearances, misperception, or misrepresentation impossible. But there can be no accurate sensory appearances if inaccurate sensory appearances are impossible.

PIRPers typically do not, therefore, characterize the extrinsic-reality-representing characteristics of experiences in terms of their straightforwardly instantiating an aboutness relation to an extrinsic reality, as they wish for the manner of representation to be of a kind that doesn't prejudge that there *is* such an extrinsic reality. Regarding the kinds of minds postulated in Cartesian skeptical scenarios, bereft of any extrinsic environment, Siewert (1998 pp. 243, 244) writes:

... we will likely find it natural to describe them as suffering from a systematic and total *hallucination* – that is, we will want to say, the way it looks to them is wholly inaccurate ...

If we suppose we can conceive of the kind of situation in which the break between environmental character and phenomenal character is this radical, we would have as much or more right to take this to indicate that the missing environmental link is unnecessary for sensory intentionality, as we would to take it to show that sensory phenomenal features are insufficient for it.

PIRPers, therefore, are wont to attribute a 'narrow', non-object-involving intentional content to experiences. Kriegel (2013 p. 19), for instance, writes, "I suspect that in phenomenal intentionality the referential connection to the world works roughly as suggested in the descriptive theory of linguistic reference, rather than as suggested by direct-reference theories". Chalmers likewise claims that the Edenic intentional content he attributes to perceptual experience requires no specific object in order to be satisfied (Chalmers 2010p. 446). From here I will assume, then, that the non-object-involving intentional content the PIRPer posits is a form of narrow content.

5. Semantic Abstracta and the Relations Thesis

It's not clear this solves the problem. If we were to take typical characterizations of narrow contents at face value, experiences possessing such contents *qua* experienced would remain in breach of the Relations Thesis, as such contents are typically characterized as semantic abstracta. Chalmers (2010 p. 363 emphasis mine), for instance, overtly distinguishes such contents from the “psychological features of an individual”, the former being “abstract entities to which psychological states may be *related*”.¹²⁸ But if the semantic contents of experiences are neither identical to nor constitutively supervenient upon the contingent psychological properties constitutive of those experiences, the Relations Thesis straightforwardly rules against them being properties the experiences possess *qua* experienced.

If there is a realm of necessarily existent abstract objects, numbers, propositions and such, then various relational facts will be logically entailed by the (presumably contingent) states of affairs involving the instantiation of phenomenal properties: that those property instantiations coexist with those various entities, that they are non-identical to all of them, maybe even that they represent some of them. But to say that the instantiation of a phenomenal property *logically entails* the pertaining of a relation between that property instance and some abstract object is not to say that the property instance alone suffices for the pertaining of that relation. On the contrary, the Relations Thesis demands that the pertaining of the relation implicate aspects of reality sufficient for the existence of the abstracta, and presumably, no part of the experience suffices to constitute any such abstracta. Were this the case, the abstracta would be identical to some categorical phenomenal, and, presumably, *contingent*, feature of the

¹²⁸ While Chalmers (2010 pp. 362, 363, 435) invokes this description in relation to a particular kind of content, the Fregean content he believes experiences possess on account of their “core inferential roles”, he presumably intends for it to apply to content in general.

experience, and therefore not necessarily existent after all. The relation therefore can't intrinsically inhere in the experience, and hence can't be an experienced aspect of it.

6. Nominalising Semantic Abstracta

The only option, therefore, is presumably to deny that such abstract object talk should be taken at face value. Many who avail themselves of semantic terms like 'content' and 'proposition' aren't fully-fledged platonic realists about meaning facts. There is a widely, though, indeed, not universally, held belief among naturalistically inclined philosophers that all truths about the representation of semantical content are ultimately settled by nominalistically respectable facts, be they facts of public language use, or facts about particular tracking relations the items of a neurally instantiated 'language of thought' bear to various extrinsic properties and things. Some, like Robert Brandom (1994 p. 134), have suggested a path from pragmatics to a nominalistically respectable semantics. Others simply use the language of high semantics, feeling relatively safe in their assumption that some kind of nominalistic reduction is at least possible in principle. After all, the idea that once all the relevant 'interpretation supplying' factors are in place, some heretofore non-existent pathway to platonic heaven opens up, has an air of metaphysical excess about it. But if the thesis that phenomenal properties are identical to real representational properties is to be believed, all the nominalistically respectable facts accounting for experiences representing semantically appraisable contents must supervene on their concrete, categorical experienced nature. Unlike the ink formations of this page, which only represent such contents by way of their immersion in a broader context of linguistic practice, phenomenal properties are supposed to

represent such contents without any such additional help. It might therefore be suggested that this experienced nature *constitutes* their semantic content.¹²⁹

Some such nominalistic reduction of semantic abstracta to phenomenally immanent concreta would appear to be the only means by which accounts of the phenomenal revelation of narrow contents might be brought in line with the Relations Thesis. It's important to be clear on what is required here. It's not enough for experiences merely to constitute such contents. Things can constitute properties without doing so by virtue of their intrinsic nature alone. Such is the case with the constitution of the various tokens of English language sentences and terms on this page by ink formations on paper. Our experiences can likewise constitute things without constituting them by virtue of their intrinsic experiential nature alone. If there were no other phenomenal properties than those of my own experience, my own experience would constitute the totality of all phenomenal properties in existence, but it wouldn't do so *qua* experienced. The fact of their being so wouldn't *be* an experienced aspect of them.

The kinds of contents generally attributed to experiences are semantic *functions*, outputting semantic values on the basis of their arguments. Descriptions, for instance, are functions from

¹²⁹ David Pitt comes close to endorsing such a view. He defends the view that phenomenal properties *constitute*, as opposed to *represent*, intentional contents, but he makes the claim with respect to phenomenal property *types*, which he characterizes as “mind-independent abstract objects” to which phenomenal property *instances* bear an instantiation relation (Pitt 2009 pp. 119, 121). Pitt (2009 p. 121) seems to think he has to make this move in order to prevent his view, which, after all, is a form of psychologism, from being the kind of subjectivising psychologism Frege famously railed against: “It is to ... “token psychologism” that Frege’s objections ... most clearly apply ... One may propose that the logical objects in question be identified, not with psychological tokens, but with psychological types”. But there is a case to be made that the whole issue of psychologism is overblown. Putnam (1975 p. 222) writes: “... the whole psychologism/Platonism issue appears somewhat a tempest in a teapot, as far as meaning-theory is concerned ... For even if meanings are ‘Platonic’ entities rather than ‘mental’ entities ... ‘grasping’ those entities is presumably a psychological state (in the narrow sense) ... And taking the psychological state to be the meaning would hardly have the consequences that Frege feared, that meanings would cease to be public. For psychological states are ‘public’ in the sense that different people ... can be in the same psychological state”. Of course, by ‘the same psychological state’, Putnam presumably means the same psychological state *type*. Were it compulsory to characterize the type-token relationship in the Platonic manner advocated by Pitt, we’d have made no progress. But Putnam’s claim that psychological states, by themselves, account for facts of ‘grasping’ contents, straightforwardly articulates the nominalist intuitions spoken about previously, and there is a more nominalistically respectable, if not entirely nominalist, characterization of type-token relations that promises to do justice to these intuitions. A commonplace characterization of universals has it that they are “wholly present” in the case of any instancing of them, wholly present ‘in’ the instancing (Lewis 1999 p. 10; Armstrong 1989 p. 98).

wider states of affairs, or some such, to referents. The semantically appraisable contents they contribute to, in turn, are functions from wider environmental facts to appropriate assignments of truth-values. For an experience to be a function from x 's to y 's' seems very much like a relational fact. If this is so, and relata of such a relation can't be ruthlessly nominalistically reduced to some aspect or other of the intrinsic, *experienced* nature of the experience, then such a relational claim cannot be made true *by that nature alone*.¹³⁰ If, as Chalmers (2010 p. 341) suggests, the essential mark of intentional contents is their having “*conditions of satisfaction*”, experiences *qua* experiences can only constitute such contents *qua* contents inasmuch as they constitute the having. Otherwise, the experiences might well constitute such a function, but not *qua* experienced. They will constitute it in the same way my experience, in the foregoing example, constitutes the totality of all phenomenal facts.

The relata to be reduced, in this case, are the semantic entities serving as *arguments* and *outputs* for such functions. The inputs are various forms of *possibilia*, possible worlds, potential states of affairs and the like. A function, after all, is not identical with any particular *realization* of its nature *qua* function. Advocates of the view that certain aspects of phenomenology are themselves functions from possible ways things might be to extensions, referents, evaluative norms or whatever, are likely to think such aspects only ever *actually* determine one set of such values, those appropriate to the *actual* way things *are*. Being such a concretely instantiated semantic function seems very much like a counterfactual notion, the property of having particular extensions, referents, or appropriate assignments of truth values *if* found in particular situations.

¹³⁰ In fact, in order for an experience to constitute such a function *qua* experienced, it won't do for the relata alone to thus reduce – the relation itself must be a relation belonging to the intrinsic phenomenal constitution of the experience, all of which are *phenomenal* relations. To put things more generally, any claim about experience will attribute some monadic property or implicate it in a relation. For those that implicate it in a relation to be made true by its experienced nature alone, every relata in the relation must reduce without remainder to some aspect or other of that experienced nature, and the relation to a phenomenal relation that nature reveals.

Of course, this is of no help so long as the counterfactual properties of categorical property instances are thought to be determined by extrinsic factors. But we have already encountered a view regarding *dispositional* properties, which might be thought the very paradigm of counterfactual properties, that would appear to hold some promise of getting around the problem of the seeming extrinsicality of arguments and outputs, the view that dispositional properties are in fact *identical* to intrinsic categorical properties. I briefly touched upon Strawson's endorsement of this view in Chapter 3, arguing that the fact that our experiences weren't experienced *as* dispositional was no reason to take it to be at odds with Robust Realism. It is a relatively common view, something of a default for those that endorse a non-Humean quidditist metaphysics, the idea being that the intrinsic nature sustaining the structural facts depicted in physical theory also serves to ground the *dynamical* facts, rendering the law-like evolution of the structure *necessary*. Of course, dispositions are a different kind of counterfactual property to the property of having particular referents or truth values in particular counterfactually articulated contexts. Still, if *any* view genuinely promises the reduction of counterfactual properties to intrinsic properties, there is at least some chance that the invocations of possibilities in descriptions of the semantic functions under consideration might be a kind of loose talk, analogous to invocations of propositions by philosophers of a more nominalist persuasion. I will assume then that some sense can be made of the idea of experiences being intrinsically and experientially possessive of non-Humean dispositional propensities or powers.¹³¹ Could their doing so facilitate a nominalistic

¹³¹ Though we have encountered good reasons for thinking they can't be. Dispositional properties, thus characterized, seem very much like intrinsic propensities to cause things in the non-Humean manner discussed in Chapter 4, intrinsic propensities to make further things happen. If the arguments there were sound, this is something of an incoherent notion. If the 'happening' is constitutively extrinsic to the so-called intrinsic propensity, then at most, it necessarily coexists, symmetrically or asymmetrically, with the propensity. The propensity doesn't *make* the 'happening'. If, in contrast, the 'happening' is intrinsic to the propensity, the propensity does indeed make the happening, but by way of constitutive inclusion. Neither such relation suffices for the kind of causal relation propensities of this kind are generally postulated to account for. In light of this, the term 'propensity' seems something of a misnomer.

reduction of the properties by virtue of which they constitute the semantic functions they are said to constitute to their experienced properties alone?

Arguably not. Non-Humean powers significantly reduce the amount of extrinsic relata serving to make counterfactual claims about their bearers true, but they don't reduce it zero. Even on non-Humean views, counterfactual properties don't inhere in the intrinsic nature of things.¹³² A thing's intrinsic powers aren't the *sole* truthmakers for the subjunctive conditionals articulating counterfactual claims about it so long as they aren't the *only* things depicted in the antecedent of such conditionals that are relevant to the pertaining of the consequent. The proponent of non-Humean powers will maintain that certain things will necessarily dissolve if added to water, not on account of some closest possible world function working from their wider four-dimensional environments, but on account of their intrinsic. But this is true on account of how that intrinsic nature will behave in a situation where it interacts with constitutively distinct natures. The fact that something is soluble still has as much to do with the nature of water as it does the intrinsic properties of the thing itself. Likewise, the fact that an experience is apt to yield certain semantic values taken in conjunction with some wider state of affairs has as much to do with the nature of the state of affairs as it does the experience.

¹³² Strawson (2008 p. 275) writes: "I'll continue to speak in the traditional way of dispositional properties, rather than of power properties, although I think the second term is better ... Actually, 'potential' is the best term, in its old meaning – 'potent', 'possessing potency or power' – but this, the first *OED* meaning, has been drowned out by the second meaning, 'possible as opposed to actual', and this is unhelpful, because potential properties in the first meaning are of course actual properties".

7. Objections

7.1 Seeing As

At this stage, an exasperated PIRPer might accuse me of making the same kind of error A.D. Smith (2000 p. 488) accuses Berkeley of with respect to depth phenomenology. One might remember from Chapter 1 that Berkeley (1962 p. 186) rejected the possibility of phenomenal depth on the basis of what he thought such depth would have to be like, i.e. a “line turned endwise to the eye”. Smith’s (2000 p. 488) response was to suggest that “we can appreciate how an experiential awareness of depth is visually possible by seeing how it is actual” Smith (2000 p. 488). Might I too be missing the woods for the trees, putting forward arguments stipulating what real phenomenal intentionality must be like in order to exist when phenomenology straightforwardly testifies to its being? I have not as yet addressed the undeniably familiar phenomenon of experiencing *as*. Previously I acknowledged that a degree of *prima facie* plausibility accrues to the claim that inasmuch as experiences are experiences *as* anything at all, they are genuinely conceptual, which plausibly entails PI. The reason I gave for tentatively thinking this is that their being experienced as things is one and the same as their being experienced to come under concepts. Am I, like Berkeley, insisting upon the impossibility of something that experience plainly shows to be possible?

On the contrary, I believe exactly the opposite situation pertains here. Proper attention to actual ‘seeing as’ phenomenology should suffice to disabuse one of the foregoing sequence of faulty *a priori* reasoning plausibly deriving from the invocation of extra-phenomenal objective notions in the description of seeing as cases.¹³³ Phenomenally speaking, seeing something as a chair is not a case of what is phenomenally presented being ‘brought under

¹³³ One might remember that Berkeley’s mistake was also plausibly the result of his application of the logic of *objective* spatial predicates to their *phenomenal* namesakes. It is the PIRPer, not I, who wishes to align intentionality phenomenology with objective intentionality.

the concept chair'. There isn't the appearance as of a phenomenal complex standing in some relation to some appearance as of the objective concept of chair-hood, as though the concept of chair-hood were somehow hovering over it. The visual appearance as of a chair is no different to that of an object, colour or shape. The visual 'chairliness' of the appearance has no more separate existence with respect to the colour and shape of the appearance of the chair than the colour does of the shape. What's more, such chairliness is nothing like the objective property of being a chair. An instance of the latter property is something you can sit in. You can't sit in an instance of visual chairliness. It's a property of visual appearances. Any essential connection it might bear to the objective property of being a chair is a further fact. Compare visual spatiality. In Chapter 4, several means of tying visual spatiality to objective spatiality were examined. None worked.¹³⁴

7.2 Chalmers' Appeal to Certainty

Chalmers' (2010 p. 414) 'Edenic' account of the perceptual contents of experience has it that experiences intrinsically represent primitive properties that are instantiated neither in those experiences themselves nor anywhere in the actual world. He does, therefore, make some attempt to address the issue of how representational relations might pertain in the absence of their relata:

If perfect redness is never instantiated in our world, then we have never had contact with any instances of it. If so, one might wonder how perfect redness can be represented in the content

¹³⁴ Chalmers maintains that certain phenomenal properties represent non-phenomenal properties, not because they appear as non-phenomenal, but on the somewhat weaker grounds that they *don't* appear as phenomenal. Regarding the property of perfect redness that phenomenal redness supposedly represents, he writes, "... it seems that an object can be perfectly red without anyone experiencing the object as perfectly red. The phenomenology of color does not seem to be the phenomenology of properties that require a perceiver in order to be instantiated" (Chalmers 2010 p. 409). This seems like fallacious reasoning, of a piece with the fallacious reasoning Ryle (1949 p. 21) famously attributes to Descartes: "Minds are not bits of clockwork, they are just bits of not-clockwork". The fact that phenomenal redness doesn't appear *as* what it in fact *is*, a phenomenal property, doesn't mean it appears as something other than what it is, a non-phenomenal property. Phenomenal redness plausibly doesn't appear *as* anything at all, it simply appears, and the philosophically naïve subject takes it to *be*, as opposed to *represent*, objective redness.

of our experiences. Construed as an objection, this point turns on the tacit premise that representing a property requires contact with instances of it. In reply, one can observe that we can certainly represent other uninstantiated properties (the property of being phlogistonated, Hume's missing shade of blue) and even represent uninstantiable properties (being a round square) (Chalmers 2010 p. 416).

But the sense of certainty in which we can "certainly represent other uninstantiated properties" isn't the peculiar epistemological certainty that supposedly accrues to phenomenal judgements by way of acquaintance with phenomenal property instances. We are exploring a view according to which certainty regarding phenomenology trumps the certainty accruing to our common sense framework, including our commonsense views regarding what we're capable of representing in thought. Many bullets have had to be bitten on this score already. The foregoing claims can't simply be assumed immune. It is understandable how one might mistakenly think as much, given that traditional Cartesianism treats contentful thought as the paradigm of certainty. But in Chapter 2, we encountered reasons for thinking that it is the topic-specific immediacy of the conscious mind, as opposed to any intellectual property thereof, that underwrites Cartesian certainty. Such certainty should only extend to intentional contents inasmuch as they are immediately phenomenally given, and the claim that they are thus given is what is presently under scrutiny.

It might also be argued that for Chalmers to cite such commonsensical certainties in the foregoing context is to put the cart before the horse. He would appear, after all, to be responding to a phenomenon that presents a potential problem for his account of representation, the representation of uninstantiated properties, by way of an appeal to certainty regarding that very phenomenon. This seems somewhat akin to the materialist responding to the problem of consciousness by appealing to certainty regarding consciousness. The question, in the latter case, isn't whether we are conscious, but whether materialism has the resources to account for such a fact. Likewise, the question of whether

Chalmers' particular account of representation is capable of accounting for the representation of uninstantiated properties is a different question from that of whether or not we do in fact represent such properties. Chalmers (2010 p. 418) acknowledges that his response isn't entirely adequate, but thinks "the residual question" is merely that of "*how* our mental states get to have a given Edenic content". Extending foregoing analogy, one might say that he is postulating a mere *explanatory gap* while I'm arguing, as per the dualist in the case of the mind-body problem, that his account invokes a logical impossibility. In the case of the mind body problem, it is the physical constitution of mind-stuff. In this case, it's the intrinsic constitution of extrinsic relations.

In any case, the problem as I have developed it, is not that of how one might represent a property in the absence of any of its *instances*, but rather, of how one might represent a property in the absence of that property *qua* instance, universal, possibilia, or in any other potential mode, how one might represent the property without the *property*. Chalmers maintains that such properties are experienced *qua* universal. In having an experience of phenomenal redness, for instance, one is acquainted with "the universal primitive redness" (Chalmers 2012b p. 7). Were acquaintance to mean the same thing in the case of universals that it does in the case of particulars, unmediated contact with whatever suffices for the existence of the object of acquaintance, this could only be the case if the universal of primitive redness was straightforwardly identical to the instance of phenomenal redness or some instantiated aspect thereof *qua* instantiated. It would have to be a phenomenal property instance, contingently existent and transient as all such phenomenal property instances are. It's not clear what could possibly be gained by such an identification. The only thing that could afford such a universal any epistemic significance is the special logical relation it bears, *qua* universal, to its instances, and that relation would remain experience extrinsic. At most,

therefore, this might count as an instance of experiences constituting something without doing so *qua* experienced.

Chalmers (2012a p. 402) differentiates between two different forms of acquaintance: “There is acquaintance with concrete entities (oneself, one’s experiences, the current time), which involves a sort of immediate indexical ostension of them. And there is acquaintance with abstract entities (properties, relations, and other abstract objects), which involves a sort of full understanding of them”. But this would appear to turn the universal the experience is supposed to constitute an understanding of back into an external relatum, in which case, such understanding cannot be experientially revealed on pain of violating the Relations Thesis. Of course, we have already seen that it’s not always entirely clear how seriously philosophers want their talk of abstract objects to be taken, and Chalmers elsewhere describes acquaintance with universals as “some sort of internal grasp of what it would take for something to instantiate the property” (Chalmers 418). But such talk of what it would take for a subject to instantiate a property seems very much like an invocation of the sufficient conditions for such instantiation. Are these sufficient conditions instantiated in experience? No. If they were, the property itself would be. They are, after all, sufficient conditions for the instantiation of the property. One could revert to the claim that experience constitutes acquaintance with the *universal* of the altogether different property of being a sufficient condition for the instantiation of the initial property, but this just takes us back to where we started. There is no point in the emergent recursive pattern at which some kind of magic occurs, and intrinsic representation of extrinsic reality is finally established. In fact, to call such representation magical is something of an understatement. Arguably, many things that would be described as instances of magic if they happened in the actual world, things levitating, or appearing *ex nihilo*, are conceptually coherent, at least by the canons of ordinary logic. The notion of something representing matters beyond its intrinsic constitution

by virtue of its intrinsic constitution alone, on the other hand, would appear to do monkey business with the fundamental logical concept of a relation.

8. Goodbye PI

It would seem that robust realists can only retain PI, and, therefore PIRP, if they are willing to revise logic in the name of metaphysics. Such a thing isn't entirely out of the question. In chapter 1, I suggested that if the nature of experience itself constituted some kind of affront to logic, as would be the case, say, if it embodied some kind of *de re* contradiction, robust realists might well see this as reason enough to revise logic accordingly. Edwin Mares (2010 p. 60) writes,

There are some clear cases in which philosophers have allowed their metaphysics to shape their logical views. Quine, at various times in his career would refuse to use second-order logic because having quantifiers binding predicate variables would commit him to accepting universals or classes in his ontology. Another example is David Lewis' *abandonment* of modal logic in favour of a first order logical theory that directly represents his counterpart theory.

But I have argued that nothing about experience forces PI upon us in this way. The objective intentionality of phenomenal appearance isn't straightforwardly entailed by the phenomenal appearance of objective intentionality. As with other phenomenal counterparts of objective phenomena, phenomenal spatiality, phenomenal colour, sound and so on, phenomenal intentionality need not be identical to, nor entail the existence of, objective intentionality. Experiences really don't seem to embody the genuine relations requisite for their constituting real intentionality. One might object that to say this is to simply beg the question and insist upon the Relations Thesis. Experiences really do embody such relations, in spite of the absence of the relevant relata, and we should therefore abandon the Relations Thesis. This move comes with a heavy theoretical cost: revision of so fundamental a logical concept as

that of a relation is certain to have other ramifications, and as there is a strong tendency to mistake phenomenal appearances of objective properties for objective properties of phenomenal appearances, evidence motivating such a revision is inherently undermined. I will give this view no further consideration in this thesis.

9. Inflating AM

If the foregoing case against PI is correct, then experiences cannot intrinsically represent a reality extending beyond their intrinsic constitution. But to say this is not to say that they can't represent such a reality at all. Robust realists who are convinced by the foregoing arguments need not give up altogether on the idea that experiences are somehow representative of the real world. They need only acknowledge that *if* experiences represent the world, they do so in virtue of their participation in wider states of affairs, as opposed to their experienced nature in and of itself.

But the demise of PI has implications that extend beyond the problem of how our minds represent the world. In Chapter 1, I pointed out that Robust Realism is premised upon the pertaining of genuine representational relations between phenomenal states and phenomenal judgments, judgments to the effect that one has such states, that they have the particular natures that they have, and so on. If PI is untenable, as I suggest, and for the reason that I maintain it to be so, i.e. the logical impossibility of intrinsically constituted extrinsic relations, an account of this representation arguably has to extend beyond the borders of phenomenology too. As I pointed out in Chapter 1, the phenomenology of demonstrative thought about one's entire phenomenal manifold seems no different to that of demonstrative thought of some objective phenomenon like a house or street. It doesn't appear to somehow take the entirety of one's phenomenology, of which it itself is a constitutive part, as its transcendently real object. It is merely an intrinsic component part of one's entire

phenomenal manifold, most of which is constitutively extrinsic to it. If cognitive phenomenology cannot intrinsically represent the phenomenology extrinsic to it, it cannot constitute the real representation that Robust Realism is premised upon.

Robust Realism *logically* depends upon the possibility of real representational relations pertaining between judgments and experiences in a way that it doesn't depend upon any representational connection with the world. Were it possible to demonstrate that even when one takes wider states of affairs into account, no representational relation can pertain between experiences and an experience extrinsic world, accepting Robust Realism would involve biting yet another bullet. If experience can't be represented in judgement, on the other hand, Robust Realism is straightforwardly incoherent. Note that not any kind of representational relation will suffice. Robust Realism requires *topic-specific* representation of experience in judgement. It is topic-specific phenomenal judgment, after all, that places Robust Realism at odds with physicalism. Were all phenomenal judgment topic-neutral, the Robust Realist would have no reason to object to the canonical topic-neutral physicalist solution to the problem of consciousness.

At the outset of this chapter, I flagged AM, a thesis that seems to at least be implicitly assumed by many classical empiricists. AM has it that an intellect that is constitutively separate to phenomenology nonetheless stands in an unmediated relation of acquaintance with it, which thereby renders that intellect capable of forming the kind of topic-specific phenomenal judgments that Robust Realism requires. The thesis was shelved while I assessed the plausibility of PI, with which it stood in a degree of tension. Inasmuch as PI has proven untenable, and experiences cannot, therefore, intrinsically constitute the kinds of real representations of phenomenal properties and states that Robust Realism requires, it would seem that robust realists are somewhat beholden to the plausibility of AM. Robust realists presumably subscribe to at least a minimal form of concept empiricism with respect to

phenomenal properties, according to which the acquisition of topic-neutral conceptions of them is at least partially grounded in contact with instances. The mind doesn't acquire *all* its phenomenal concepts by way of intellectually grasping them *qua* uninstantiated universals, and then form judgements that experiences just happen to make true. Immediate contact with instances presumably plays some role, whether or not abstraction from phenomenal concepts formed on the basis of such contact facilitates the attainment of further phenomenal concepts.¹³⁵

As might have been ascertained from the last paragraph, the proponent of AM need not set the kinds of boundaries with respect to the operations of the intellect that created trouble for PI. The facts pertaining to the intellect's formation of phenomenal judgements can be as 'wide' as one likes, taking concrete states of affairs, facts about relations they bear to abstract objects, and anything else one might care to imagine. All that matters is that the mind forming such judgements has unmediated topic-specific contact with an experience, and that this contact at least partially informs the formation process.

10. The Problem of AM-Connectedness

One is intuitively inclined to think that the acquainted mind postulated by AM forms phenomenal judgements by way of *interaction* with experience, and, while the mind presumably cannot control the entire course of experience, that the mind's interactions with experience have at least some effect. Attention phenomenology, for instance, might be thought an upshot or accompaniment of its attending activity. Yet, as I have argued in Chapter 4, talk of interaction of this kind cannot be construed as spatial interaction or causal interaction. It's difficult to imagine what remains of the notion of interaction once one rules

¹³⁵ Even if one were to subscribe to a queer rationalism of this kind, where minds form topic-specific phenomenal judgements in a manner entirely independent of direct acquaintance with instances, such direct acquaintance would presumably be required for such judgements to be *justified*, as opposed to merely true.

both these options out. The difficulty is apparent in attempted descriptions of such interaction. For instance, regarding his paradigmatically topic-specific “direct phenomenal concepts”, Chalmers (2010 pp. 267, 279) speaks of qualities of phenomenal properties the mind attends to being “taken up” into concepts, and elsewhere describes such concepts as containing within them “a “slot” for an instantiated quality such that the quality that fills the slot constitutes the content”. Such talk is intended to be metaphorical, but there is no indication as to what remains when such claims are stripped of metaphor – the metaphor flags a theoretical need for explanation, rather than the explanation itself. The acquaintance relation that AM postulates between experiences and the intellect, herein referred to as AM-connectedness, will presumably have to feature somewhere in any account of such interaction, but once again, it’s difficult to know what is meant by a term like ‘acquaintance’ once the spatial proximity inherent in the folk concept is removed.¹³⁶

Spatial, and other ‘dimensional cohabitation’ relations, and causal relations, are somewhat distinctive inasmuch as they are external relations that aren’t merely functions of the comparative natures of their relata. That two constitutively separate things occupy a certain distance from each other isn’t merely a matter of similarities and differences in their intrinsic natures, or comparative similarities and differences those natures bear in turn to anything or everything else occupying that continuum. (Something that is intrinsically indistinguishable from something that is five feet from a river isn’t also, therefore, five feet from a river). Such relations hold between particulars *in their particularity*, not merely between particulars *qua*

¹³⁶ It’s worth noting that even if, contrary to the arguments of Chapter 4, spatial and or causal relations between intellects and experiences *were* in fact possible, it’s not clear, in any case, how the pertaining of such relations could be in any way relevant to the pertaining of an immediate acquaintance relation between them. If acquaintance relations were somehow a function of spatial relations, they would be spatially *mediated* relations. As for causal relations, while there is such a relation as that of being the immediate cause of something, such a relation wouldn’t seem to be what’s desired in this instance, as acquaintance is typically characterized as a more ‘passive’ relation, preceding and facilitating cognitive interaction with experiences. It would therefore seem that even if such relations were to pertain, they would be irrelevant.

tokens of certain types. Causation, both Humean and non-Humean, is likewise a relation between particulars *qua* particulars.

10.1 AM-Connectedness as a Phenomenal Relation

Dimensional cohabitation and causal interaction are plausibly the *only* naturalistically respectable relations that are capable of metaphysically uniting constitutively extrinsic things *qua* particulars. But we aren't working within a strictly naturalistic framework. We are working within the framework of Robust Realism, and Robust Realism admits of an altogether different species of metaphysical relation between particulars *qua* particulars, namely, *phenomenal* relations.

Chalmers (2010 p. 286) thinks it plausible that acquaintance is a phenomenal relation: "I think there is something to the idea that our special epistemic relation to experience is revealed in our experience". Elsewhere, he expresses sympathy for the view that "phenomenal awareness is an acquaintance involving relation by its very nature", and that such awareness is "irreducibly a phenomenal relation" (Chalmers 2012b p. 5). But while Chalmers (2010 p. 269) is noncommittal regarding whether the immediate interfacing of cognition with experience facilitating the formation of topic-specific phenomenal concepts and such is an experience internal relation, AM straightforwardly stipulates that it isn't. It is an external relation that an experience stands in to something constitutively distinct from it. The pertaining of an AM-connectedness relation between an intellect and an experience couldn't possibly be revealed *in* the experience, as the constitutive nature of the intellect is, by definition, *outside* the experience, and the Relations Thesis demands the involvement of that constitutive nature in the pertaining of the relation.

Might AM-connectedness be a phenomenal relation that *isn't* internal to the experience it relates to the intellect, a relation that isn't revealed in that experience, but that is nonetheless

a phenomenal relation? Not if AM-connectedness is to be a relation immediately acquainting an intellect with the entire phenomenal manifold comprising a subject's experience.

Presumably this must be the case if such acquaintance is to underwrite cognitive appreciation, however attenuated, of subjective experience as a whole. Phenomenal relations relate *phenomenal* relata, and so for the intellect AM postulates to stand in any kind of phenomenal relation, the intellect must itself be phenomenally constituted. Moreover, phenomenal relations relate phenomenal relata *phenomenally*. Their pertaining requires the instantiation of a complex phenomenal state that phenomenally "subsumes" the sufficient conditions for their pertaining (Chalmers 2010 p. 501). But it was argued in Chapter 4 that our entire phenomenal manifolds cannot be coexperienced with anything else, as they themselves comprise what it's like to experience what we experience *and nothing else*.

10.2 AM-Connectedness as a Shared Phenomenal Content Relation

We have encountered one other species of metaphysical relation that promises to unite particulars *qua* particulars. One might remember from Chapter 4 that some philosophers have entertained the idea that the co-consciousness relation that pertains between all the components of a phenomenal manifold might be an *intransitive* relation, such that distinct phenomenal manifolds can share token phenomenal content. Such a shared content relation isn't a phenomenal relation, as it doesn't relate its relata phenomenally. It is, nonetheless, a relation between phenomenal relata, or, at least, between relata comprising of phenomenal parts. And so, for a constitutively distinct intellect to bear such a relation to an experience, it must itself be at least partially phenomenally constituted.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ If it is only partially phenomenally constituted, a further question arises, that of what relation between the phenomenal and non-phenomenal part serves to unite them into a singular intellect. Let us call this relation mindmaking-connectedness. The problem of mindmaking-connectedness seems very much like that of AM-connectedness. The only resources available for solving it, in the absence of dimensional, causal and phenomenal relations, are appeals to further relations of shared phenomenal content, or comparative relations of

Yet such a relation also fails to appropriately ground AM-connectedness. In this case, it is the *immediacy* of such a relation that seems dubious. Since a phenomenally constituted constitutively extrinsic intellect could only ever have *some* phenomenal content in common with an entire phenomenal manifold – lest we encounter, once again, the problem of experiencing the phenomenal finitude of that manifold in conjunction with other things – any relation the intellect bears to the manifold as a whole will presumably be *mediated* by the relation it bears to something less than the whole. Given that the rather outré assumption that the intellects AM-connected with experiences are at least partially phenomenally constituted themselves, and share phenomenal parts with those experiences, has no theoretical payoff, I assume its falsity herein.

10.3 AM-Connectedness as a Comparative Relation

In the absence of spatiotemporal, causal, phenomenal and shared phenomenal content relations, experience and the intellect would appear to be radically disconnected, much like the possible worlds of David Lewis's (1986b pp. 69, 70) metaphysics, with no metaphysical ties *qua* particulars. It would therefore seem that their AM-connectedness must be a function of their comparative natures, much like Lewis's (1986b pp. 70, 71) counterpart relation.

Assuming a multitude of such intellects, and a numerically identical number of phenomenal manifolds, it is presumably the comparative similarities and differences between the various intellects, in concert with the comparative similarities and differences between the various phenomenal manifolds, that serve to forge the supposedly one-one correlations between intellects and manifolds. If the comparative features of intellects are to be capable of underwriting AM-Connectedness to a phenomenal manifold of some particular character, then potential variability in the comparative character of such intellects must presumably be

the kind to be discussed shortly. Obviously, if further shared phenomenal content relations suffice to complete the story, the intellect is phenomenally constituted after all.

proportionate to the potential variability in comparative character of phenomenal manifolds, both structural and intrinsic.

Comparative relations binding intellects and experiences in this way might be said to satisfy the immediacy requirement inasmuch as there is no mediating factor involved. Such a characterisation of AM-connectedness is nonetheless fraught with problems.

(i) *Privileged Mapping* – An initial concern is that it relies on a special *privileged* mapping from comparative properties of intellects to altogether different comparative properties of experiences.¹³⁸ Isomorphisms are cheap; if there is one potential means of mapping comparative properties of the aforementioned intellects and experiences so as to bring them into one-one correspondence, there's sure to be others that yield altogether different one-one correspondences.¹³⁹ Yet what makes any such mapping the *right* mapping? Inasmuch as Robust Realism is a form of transcendental realism, its proponents might not be too worried by this objection inasmuch as they are presumably committed to there being *some* such privileged relationship between thoughts and their referents. But it is worthwhile noting that inasmuch as Robust Realism admits of a slum of qualitative simples, Lewis's (1999 pp. 13, 46, 47, 66) well known solution of privileging an "elite" class of "perfectly natural properties" as referents falls short of providing a complete solution in this case. Such a class, in this case, would be inordinately large, comprising, for instance, every potential permutation of every phenomenal colour property. The elite mapping in this case would still, therefore, have to invoke an inordinate amount of inexplicably privileged correspondences

¹³⁸ An intellect presumably doesn't forge an acquaintance relation with a phenomenal manifold of a certain character by constitutively embodying a separate instance of that very same character. In fact, it couldn't, unless it was itself some ungodly mereological amalgam of such a manifold and other stuff that is completely disconnected from it. Such an amalgam could only be something more than a gerrymandered mereological object if there were already some altogether different basis for forging connections between metaphysically disconnected phenomenal and non-phenomenal individuals.

¹³⁹ For more on this, see Chapter 2 of Putnam (1981).

between comparative properties of intellects and irreducibly primitive phenomenal properties.

I take this to be a theoretical cost for the position.

(ii) *Dynamic Change* – Let us assume, in any case, that such a privileged correspondence somehow obtains. Another potential problem for this view derives from the primitive dynamism of experience discussed in Chapter 4. For a mapping relation between a particular intellect and a particular phenomenal manifold to be *sustained*, the intellect must admit of dynamical change that is inexplicably in concert with the dynamical change of the phenomenal manifold, such that the special mapping relation that AM-connects them is sustained. Otherwise, AM-connectedness would be transient and changeable, with intellects dropping in and out of AM-connectedness with one or more distinct phenomenal manifolds.

(iii) *Overdetermination* – A closely related problem is that of overdetermination. Consider a possibility in which there are two experiences embodying the comparative properties apt to AM-connect them to a particular phenomenal manifold. Do they both do so? If there are likewise two qualitatively indistinguishable phenomenal manifolds, are both AM-connected to both manifolds?

(iv) *Justification* – A bigger problem for the view under consideration is that it undermines the intuitive appeal of the robust realist's account of the *justification* of phenomenal judgement, an account that is almost certainly premised upon the assumption that AM-connectedness is a relation that unifies intellects and experiences, in some metaphysically significant sense, in their particularity. Let us assume, as per the view, that an intellect has comparative properties apt to forge a privileged, though purely comparative, isomorphic relationship with a phenomenal manifold of some maximally specific nature. Let us likewise assume, as per the view, that the strongest metaphysical relation the intellect is capable of bearing to such a manifold is that of coexistence in absolute isolation from it. Finally, let us imagine that the intellect makes a judgment to the effect that a phenomenal property that such

a phenomenal manifold would constitute the instantiation of is in fact instantiated. The claim that the existence of such a phenomenal manifold might serve to make the judgment *true* has some semblance of plausibility given the realist assumptions temporarily in play. But this set of assumptions only gives us the desired result if an intellect making a judgement about something in complete isolation from it would be *justified* in making such a judgement so long as that something is as the judgement dictates. This seems to be an unholy assimilation of justification to truth. One might attempt to save such a theory by maintaining that it just so happens that, whenever an intellect instantiates the comparative properties apt to AM-connect it to a phenomenal manifold of a particular character, there exists a phenomenal manifold with such a character. But as Chalmers (1996 p. 194) points out,

... if our beliefs about consciousness were justified only by a reliable connection, then we could not be *certain* that we are conscious. The mere existence of a reliable connection cannot deliver certainty, for we have no way to rule out the possibility that the reliable connection is absent and that there is no consciousness at the other end. The only way to be sure here would be to have some *further* access to the other end of the connection; but that would be to say that we have some further basis to our knowledge of consciousness.

If there is a case to be made for certainty regarding the pertaining of the kind of comparative property based AM-connectedness between radically metaphysically disconnected intellects and experiences that is presently under discussion, I'm yet to encounter it.

(v) *Undermining Robust Realism* – This brings us to the most obvious problem for such an account, that it seems totally disconnected from those phenomenal considerations that motivate Robust Realism in the first place. Experiences seem to embody *particular* phenomenal property instances, and Robust Realism is premised upon their seeming to do so. It is this appearing of phenomenal properties in their particularity that is meant to justify phenomenal judgements, not a queer relation they bear, *qua* instances of a type, to a radically disconnected intellect.

The disconnect between experience and the intellect being considered at present is far more radical than that which underwrites the topic-neutral accounts of phenomenal properties that robust realists characteristically reject. In fact, when one considers the robust realist's reasons for rejecting such topic-neutral theories, the current view would appear, at best, to be on an equal footing with them. Topic-neutral views only denies us a topic-specific *cognitive grasp* of the intrinsic nature of experiences, not that they have such a nature. One can imagine a view, however implausible, that affords experiences the very same nature that Robust Realism affords them but denies a topic-specific grasp of that nature. The robust realist rejects topic-neutral views because experiences appear to immediately reveal their topic-specific nature, taking it for granted that their appearing to do so can be cognitively accounted for. Experiences also appear to reveal phenomenal properties in their particularity, and it would very much seem that robust realists likewise take it for granted that such a fact can be cognitively accounted for. Topic-neutral views typically account for this much. Subjects stand in a relation of topic-neutral conception to their own particular experiences, not any experiences of a particular kind. But it would seem that robust realists might be wrong to take such things for granted. If, for instance, the faculty of judgment cannot directly interface with phenomenal properties *qua* particular instances, which seems to be the case, it cannot form the special kinds of phenomenology apt judgments that the robust realist believes to be made possible by the immediate givenness of particular instances of phenomenal properties.

11. Conclusion

The Relations Thesis entails that phenomenal states cannot intrinsically represent a reality extending beyond their intrinsic constitution, even in a narrowly circumscribed non-object-involving sense. Cognitive phenomenological states cannot, therefore, sustain the transcendently real representations of phenomenal properties that Robust Realism is

premised upon. Robust realists seem to be beholden to AM in order account for such representations, but there doesn't seem to be any viable candidate, given Robust Realism, for the AM-connectedness relation that AM posits. This places Robust Realism itself in question.

Afterword

The exploration of Robust Realism undertaken in this thesis is motivated by the possibility that Robust Realism might constitute a principled form of resistance to Daniel Dennett's eliminativist strategy. Over the course of the thesis, I have given my reasons for concluding that Robust Realism is not only a costly position, but also possibly incoherent, inasmuch as it appears to disallow the very representational relations that define it.

One might take this to be good grounds to accept Dennett's own position. I am not sure that this follows. Recall that Robust Realism makes two claims:

- 1) The claim that our justification for accepting the existence of phenomenal properties is in our unmediated access to instances of such properties.
- 2) The claim that Dennettian Dissolution is never acceptable.

Might it be possible to abandon 1 and retain 2? I'm by no means confident that such an option is in fact tenable, but in the dialogic context it requires some investigation. Note that 1 divides into two distinct commitments,

- i) We have unmediated access to instances of phenomenal properties.
- ii) Our having such access somehow feeds into an account of transcendentally real representations of such properties and the justification thereof.

While rejection of (i) would itself appear to constitute an invocation of Dennettian Dissolution, and therefore a rejection of (2), (ii) plausibly takes us beyond phenomenology, as I have argued in Chapter 6 that phenomenology cannot intrinsically sustain transcendentally real representations of phenomenology. Abandonment of (ii) fits well with the Zen-like nature of non-deflationary accounts of phenomenal experience, for which such experience already constitutes a kind of transmission beyond concepts. The only difference is

that in this case experience *remains* beyond concepts. Lao-tzu famously proclaimed that “The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao” (Baird & Heimbeck 2006 p. 371). Perhaps, in similar fashion, the qualia I have been speaking of throughout this thesis cannot be the transcendently real qualia I had hoped to speak of. Perhaps my arguments only serve as demonstrations of the kinds of antinomies that arise when we attempt to bring ‘the transcendental’ under empirical concepts.

Such a view does not count as a form of phenomenal realism inasmuch as it eschews all cognitively-inflected attitudes towards qualia, realist or otherwise, in favour of a non-cognitive acknowledgement of the inexpressible. I personally prefer it to the deflationist option. Dennettian Dissolution has always struck me as perverse in its refusal of what seems an apparent fact of experience, and continues to do so.¹⁴⁰ Of course, to place qualia beyond the realms of possible discourse is to bow out of the qualia debate, but perhaps entering the debate was a mistake in the first place. Deflationists have always dismissed more inflated qualia talk as nonsense, and perhaps they were right to do so. The qualia invoked in such talk were a defective empirical concept, the finger, rather than the moon we try to point to.

¹⁴⁰ My intuitive response to the Dennettian claim that my intellect is tricking me into thinking I encounter phenomenal properties is that in such a case, my intellect is doing too good a job. A trick performed this well ceases to be a trick.

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